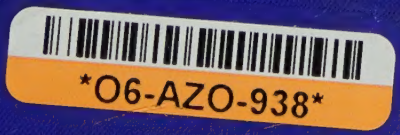
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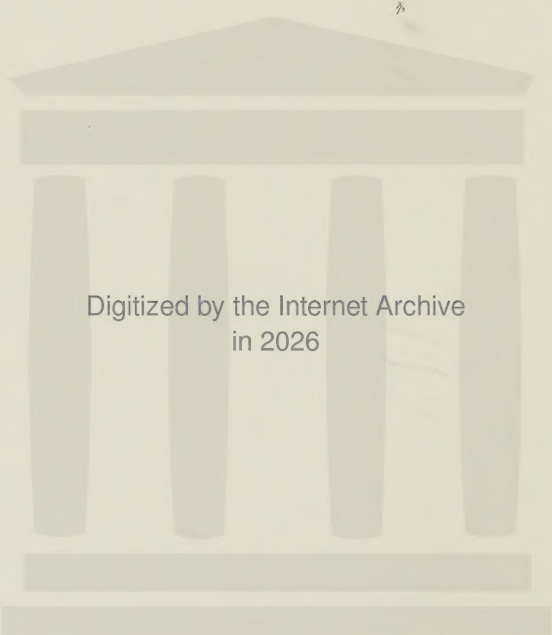

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IN MEMORIAM

BY

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

EDITED WITH A COMMENTARY BY

ARTHUR W. ROBINSON D.D.

CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1914

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PREFACE

THIS edition of the *In Memoriam* has been prepared at the request of the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press.

Much has been written in recent years which has helped to shed light upon Tennyson's position as a spokesman and teacher of his age; much too that is of special interest and value to students of this particular poem. As will be seen, I have availed myself freely of such assistance. I was well aware nevertheless, when I began, of the difficulty and delicacy of the task which I had undertaken; and the conviction has strengthened as the work has gone on.

It is no easy matter to present in just proportions the bearings of a masterpiece, which may truly be said to be of equal importance whether we regard it as a creation of art, a study in psychology, a criticism of science, or a contribution to religious thought. Again and again it has been necessary to be content with the barest suggestions, where the temptation was great to enlarge upon a specially attractive theme. When moreover it is remembered that at almost every line

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some interesting inquiry arises as to the precise force of an expression, or the exact meaning of an allusion, it will easily be understood that it has been hard to keep within the limits prescribed in the case of a handbook intended for general use.

For one class of omissions I have no apology to make. It has not seemed to me that it was a part of my business as a commentator to venture upon any judgment as to the permanent worth of what Tennyson has written; or to offer any opinion as to ways in which his thoughts, or the presentation of them, might conceivably have been changed for the better. Indeed I must confess that the more I read of attempts of this kind, the more I am disposed to conclude that Tennyson himself was right when he said, towards the close of his latest volume,

> But seldom comes the poet here,
> And the Critic 's rarer still.

My aim has been the humbler one of seeking to interpret and illustrate. I have spared no pains to get at the author's standpoint, and to set forth his meaning as clearly and simply as I could. In spite of shortcomings—and they are many—I am bold to hope that the result may be of some service in helping towards a yet further understanding and appreciation of a poem which has done far more than any of us could tell for the ennoblement and enrichment of our English life and its literature.

It is due to the kind permission of Messrs Macmillan that the Text of *In Memoriam* has been taken from the latest published edition.

I would also express my very grateful thanks to a brother and to a friend who at first encouraged me to undertake this work, and have aided me throughout the course of it by many most valuable suggestions.

A. W. R.

ALLHALLOWS BARKING, E.C.
January, 1901.

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TRULY GOD IS LOVING UNTO ISRAEL:
NEVERTHELESS MY FEET WERE ALMOST GONE.

INTRODUCTION

I

It is a long step backwards, in our quickly moving times, to the years 1828—1833. In the earliest of these years Alfred Tennyson went up from his Lincolnshire home to enter upon his residence at Trinity College, Cambridge. Arrived there he found himself in the midst of surroundings which would appeal to him as they have so often and so powerfully appealed to others. None could be more conscious than he of the 'indefinable charm that haunts those grey and venerable quadrangles of Oxford and Cambridge,' or be more impressed by 'the stately halls, the silent and venerable libraries, the solemn chapels, the studious old-world gardens': none certainly would be more alive to all those 'associations of scholars and poets, of saints and sages' which make 'a dream of music for the inward ear, and of delight for the contemplative eye[1].'

Nor were these by any means the only fascinations which would cast their spell over his ardent and sensitive spirit. Our Universities would not be what they are, if we

[1] Mr John Morley, Address on *The Study of Literature*, Feb. 26, 1887.

could imagine them—as happily we cannot—stripped of their old-world memories and associations; but yet these by themselves will not suffice to account for the hold which they have gained upon the affections of their most highly gifted sons. For such these abodes of culture and learning have been rendered most dear by the fact that they have found in them the homes to which they have been indebted for some of the freshest and purest and most enduring friendships of their lives.

To Tennyson, without question, his stay at Cambridge was chiefly memorable on account of the friendship which he formed there with one who though younger than himself[1] seemed nevertheless to be the born companion and counsellor of his spirit. At that time a number of exceptionally gifted junior men were gathered within the University; but, intimate as he became with others, it was in Arthur Hallam that Tennyson discovered what he had scarcely dreamed that he could find in any human being. Something in each seemed to supply the very thing longed for by the other. Thought wedded with thought. They quickly became inseparable. In the courts, up and down the long avenue, by the river, at the 'backs,' they were to be seen walking, sitting, talking together, perpetually. Each possessed the poetic, the prophetic gift, by which he was enabled to see deeper and further than most of the men about him.

It was an age full to bursting of great ideas and seemingly limitless possibilities. Kant and Coleridge and Wordsworth had transformed the spirit of philosophy. The Reform Bill of 1832 was but one of many indications of the direction of the social movement then in progress. Science had

[1] See the *Chronological Table*, p. 266.

suddenly started into new life. Every day was antiquating more and more of the opinions which had seemed most firmly established. It was indeed a time in which to live and think—and to be young.

During the terms at Cambridge, in vacations on the Rhine or in the Pyrenees, the friendship was ripened and matured. Later on, when Hallam came down from the Law Courts, there were family gatherings on the lawn at Somersby with readings from Dante and Petrarch; and wanderings in the woods, when the two discussed the newest books, or 'touched the changes of the state,' or 'threaded some Socratic dream.' Then the day arrived when the bond between them seemed about to receive its final ratification, as Hallam became engaged to the sister of his friend. So indeed it seemed: but in an instant the delightful dream was ended. Hallam had been ordered abroad for the benefit of his health. His father, the historian, accompanied him. They were at Vienna. The elder man had taken a walk, leaving his son, who had complained of a headache, to rest on a sofa. On his return he found him, as he imagined, quietly sleeping; and not wishing to disturb him, he sat down to write his letters. But as the silence and stillness continued, he became anxious, and drew near to the sleeper only to discover that the sleep was death.

The fatal news came home. The blow was a staggering one. A sorrow heavy and dark settled down on the life of the survivor. Seventeen years passed, for the most part in silence, and then there were given to the world, at first anonymously, the sad sweet strains of *In Memoriam*.

2

We have tried to recall the circumstances of the terrible loss which Tennyson sustained by the death of his dearest friend. It is impossible to relate the facts however briefly without feeling moved to sympathise with such a grief. At the same time it is only truth to say that it is one thing to be stirred to pity and regret at the account of what might well have appeared to be the premature termination of a life which gave such rich promise of beauty and usefulness, and quite another to be sure that the occurrence was one which could with advantage be described in all its bearings through a poem of considerable length intended for the eyes of the public at large.

The story of the personal devotion of two young men who had been thrown together at the period in their lives when natures are most susceptible, and when ardent admirations are readily excited in generous souls, attractive and interesting as it may be to the immediate circle of their personal friends, is scarcely calculated to win the respectful attention of a world which is wont to attach little permanent value to sentiment, and is as a rule only too coldly indifferent to that which might have been.

Nor could the attempt be commended on the ground of its novelty. Those who cared to know what poetic genius could do in the way of erecting a memorial to such a friendship might turn to Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, or Milton's *Lycidas*[1],

[1] The motive of Milton's poem bears a remarkable resemblance to that which led Tennyson to write. *Lycidas* is a lament, under the guise of a Pastoral, over a young man named Edward King, Milton's junior at Christ's College, Cambridge, who after winning golden opinions for amiability and scholarship, met his end by drowning in St George's Channel.

or Shelley's *Adonais*[1]. It would be difficult to suppose that passionate adulation, or classic imagery, or mystic reverie, had not already been engaged to the utmost in these attempts to invest just such a theme with whatever was most calculated to appeal to the heart, to stimulate the mind, or to impress the imagination.

Small wonder then that some of those who knew beforehand of the intended publication[2], and many more who opened the volume entitled *In Memoriam* at its first appearance, should have felt very considerable misgiving as to what it was likely to contain. Happily a short acquaintance with the book must have been sufficient to convince most readers that all such apprehensions were needless. The most hasty perusal would prove that the new work carried on the face of it the signs of an unmistakable originality, and merited all the more consideration just because its treatment of the subject was so markedly unlike what it might have been had it been attempted by other hands.

Nothing really could be further from the truth than the notion that *In Memoriam* consists of a number of 'miniatures of the same individual.' The poem is primarily a description of the varying states and conditions through which the mind of the writer passed, as it slowly recovered itself from the terrible effects of the storm which had shaken its very foundations and laid bare its inmost recesses. It is true that we are never permitted to forget the departed friend, and true also that the realisation of what he was is made to grow upon us steadily as we proceed: but as a matter of

[1] Written in 1822, on the death of Keats in the 24th year of his age.

[2] See, for example, the opinion of Fitzgerald, quoted in the note on canto xxi. (p. 184).

fact our sense of the force and beauty of his character is derived far less from any deliberate descriptions, than from the disclosure of the utter blank which his removal had left in the life of the mourner, and of the perpetual craving for any ray of light which could encourage the hope of a future recognition and reunion.

Indeed it is no mere paradox to assert that *In Memoriam* is what it is as a tribute to a departed friend, just because it was not a deliberate attempt to impress the world with his worth. The world has been impressed by what it perceives to have been the impression made upon the heart and mind of the poet. It has even learned to cherish with a reverent gratitude the memory of one to whom it owes it that it has been permitted to witness the very deepest workings of a great nature when brought face to face with those dread mysteries of life and death which sooner or later perplex, if they do not entirely baffle and bewilder, us all.

If we seek for a parallel to *In Memoriam*, we shall probably discover what will be most to our purpose, not in any examples such as those already cited from our own English literature, but rather in the great Italian masterpiece of the 13th century. Tennyson himself once said of his poem, 'It was meant to be a kind of Divina Commedia[1].'

His immediate reference was, as he explained, to the simple and obvious fact that his own work, like that of Dante, opens with gloom and ends in brightness. But when once the comparison has been suggested, it can hardly fail to strike us that the resemblance is in reality much more remarkable than might at first appear. In each of the poems the passage of the poet is traced by

[1] *Memoir*, i. p. 304.

himself through dark and desolate places, past many a mystery that sorely affrights the heart, along paths often the most unexpected, anxiously but steadily onwards towards the upper light: and in each of the poems there is another human spirit, raised far above the struggle, thought of often as removed almost beyond the hope of possible intercourse, yet all the while acting as the strong magnet which draws the soul away from the earthly and material to the heavenly and spiritual sphere.

Indeed we cannot sum up our account of the matter more truly than by saying that as Beatrice is commemorated by Dante, so Arthur is commemorated by Tennyson[1].

3

In Memoriam is, then, as its title implies, a tribute of affection to the worth of a dearly loved and deeply lamented friend. But it is much more. Its abiding value for the world at large lies in the fact that in it is recorded the experience of a man, endowed beyond his fellows with wealth of heart and intellect, who shrank from no cost in his determination to find out a way through doubts and difficulties, before which a nature less vital and a spirit less true would have been reduced to silence, if not driven to despair.

We have spoken already of the ferment of change which was beginning to produce its unsettling effects in the days when Tennyson was still an undergraduate at Cambridge.

[1] It is interesting to notice an expression used by the father of Hallam in referring to the *In Memoriam* poems. 'The image of Arthur,' he says, 'hovers like a dim shadow over these.' ('Advertisement' to the *Remains* of A. H. H. when given to the public in 1853.)

Every year that followed made it clearer that the old order was changing and giving place to a new. A new spirit was abroad; new *data* were being accumulated, and new methods of criticism were extracting new inferences from them. Men's minds were keenly alive. The passion for knowledge was increasing, and the wildest expectations were being entertained as to the marvels to which the general enlightenment of education, together with the spread of material comfort, might at no long interval lead. As a set-off against such expectations, there grew up in other minds the gravest forebodings as to what would be likely to come of a progress which was to leave behind it, as so many unnecessary encumbrances, not a few of the beliefs and sanctions which had upheld and directed the best life of the past.

It was a time which needed, and might be expected to produce, a great poet: one who would be able to gather into himself the forces that were travailing around him, and bring to the birth conceptions with which many were struggling who could not be content with forms of expression now no longer adequate to contain the new thoughts which were so painfully straining for utterance.

It is not surprising therefore that interest began to be aroused when once the real purpose of *In Memoriam* was understood; and it came to be whispered that here was an attempt by a man, whom the aged Wordsworth could describe as 'decidedly the first of our living poets[1],' to trace a path across the confusions and contradictions of the time—a path by which men might still hope to press on towards the

[1] In a letter to Professor Henry Reed of Philadelphia, dated July 1, 1845; see *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, ii. p. 416.

highest ideals of faith and the very furthest goals of hope, while yet at the same time they kept clearly in view the latest investigations of science and the most recent deductions of philosophy.

From his earliest youth Tennyson had set himself to understand the new facts which were being brought to light through the discoveries of natural science, with the simple determination to get at the truth of them whatever its bearings and consequences might be. When therefore the great sorrow of his life suddenly compelled him to face the most tremendous problems of human existence, he was able at once to realise what the conditions were under which alone he could attempt to deal with them and seek for their solution. If the theories of materialism were to be trusted, then there must be an end to all possibility of a higher faith. If the soul were a mere function of a brain which itself was only a product of chemical compounds, and if death was to be the end of all—then indeed hope and love would have to give place to other qualities better adapted to further the business and promote the pleasures of mankind, with the result that life as it would remain would have but little to offer which could possess any attraction for the noblest of its children. Utterly as the instinct of a poet might recoil from the consideration of such alternatives and of the hypotheses upon which they were based, it was impossible that he should ignore them and yet imagine that he could interpret the meaning, or minister to the necessities, of his age.

The poet of the 13th century, setting forth on his spiritual pilgrimage, might choose for his guide Virgil, the great master who stood for the middle ages as the unchallenged arbiter in every department of literature: but

the poet of the 19th century had to submit himself to a yet more exacting discipline. He had perforce to shape his way under the perpetual sense that he must satisfy the requirements not merely of an exponent of ancient letters, but of the interpreter of modern science. In his case the companionship was by no means always an encouraging one: and many a time there came dark moments when it needed all the energies of a really great nature to enable him to keep heart and press on. How he did keep heart, and how eventually he found a standing ground for the feet which so often 'had well-nigh slipped,' it is his purpose to shew to any who will follow the course of the poem which he himself sometimes spoke of as 'The way of the Soul.'

Without question there will be those in the future, as there have been in the past, who will be chiefly attracted to *In Memoriam* by its exquisite descriptions of natural objects, its perfect power of reflecting the passing moods of human feeling, its unrivalled quality of condensed expression, and its marvellous mastery of rhythm; and that quite independently of any interest which they may feel in the trend of the argument or the conclusions to which it leads.

On the other hand it is no less certain that in the future as in the past an even larger number of its readers will be drawn to the poem because they believe that they can discover in it the power of the prophet, which, when joined with the skill of the artist, creates the kind of poetry that not only lingers in the ear and supplies images of brightness to the imagination, but wins its way through the intellect and the affections until it awakens the deepest response of the spirit.

4

It may help to prepare us for a more detailed study of the poem if we endeavour to indicate very briefly and broadly what were the great convictions which strengthened themselves in the mind of the writer as he went on, and gave the distinctive note and character to his utterances as a whole. We shall probably be right in saying that these convictions were three in number.

1. The first of them was the conviction that *the easy and optimistic view of Nature*, which had satisfied the thinkers of the generations immediately preceding his own, *must of necessity be abandoned.* Those who had been engaged in the religious and philosophical controversies of the 18th century had felt themselves justified in assuming that the order of Nature was a beneficent one, deliberately designed to promote the happiness and well-being of mankind. Even Wordsworth, who was attracted to Nature more entirely for its own sake, had not been inclined to question what was supposed to be the fundamental tenet of 'Natural Religion.' To such thinkers and seers the material order, with its appearance of permanence and its ever renewed beauty, lent no 'evil dreams.' They found no great difficulty in trusting that 'God was love indeed, and love Creation's final law.' At all events it was not from any study of Nature that such a difficulty would have come to them.

But the whole aspect of the matter was seriously altered for eyes that could see, or foresee, the uplifting of the veil by the hand of modern science. The Nature which had previously seemed so fair was shewn in reality to be an arena of struggle and carnage. Instead of the vision of

beauty and peace there was substituted the spectacle of what looked only too like discord and waste and heartless indifference. There was development of higher organisms no doubt, but it was achieved at the cost of an apparently reckless destruction of the lower: and there was no sort of security that the highest themselves would not ultimately be overthrown, with no more of hope than the grim anticipation that conceivably the whole process might be repeated all over again.

2. The next conviction, not less powerful than the first, was that *the view of the world suggested by such an interpretation of Nature* on the part of materialistic science was a view which *can never be otherwise than intolerable* to the general heart and conscience of mankind.

It was wholly impossible to become reconciled to it: and the notion that a compensation for what man might lose of dignity or hope could be found in any increase of secular knowledge or any additions to physical comfort, was the most miserable mockery and insult that could be offered to the human intelligence. To a being endowed with the sense of justice and the power of love, continued existence could only be a curse and a degradation, when once it was certain that his higher aspirations could never be realised, and that his most sacred affections must crumble into dust. Under such conditions effort would be robbed of its motive, and no merely animal enjoyments which earth had to offer could make it worth while to stay.

3. The final conviction, maintained with an ever-growing passion of earnestness, was that it would be *through a larger understanding of the range and meaning of Nature* that *faith and hope would again emerge.*

In the hours of deepest gloom when intellect was urging

its conclusions with the most remorseless logic, there rose within the soul of the struggler the increasing certainty that the verdict of Nature has not been fully heard until it has included the testimony of Human Nature: and that, moreover, just as Nature is only partially represented by Nature external to man, so also man himself is only partially and most imperfectly represented when he is judged by his intellect alone.

'A strong and vital personality is more sure of its own abiding reality than of all the so-called facts of the outer world. · A sensitive conscience demands the existence of moral order and progress in the Universe, no less absolutely than the intellect demands settled uniformity in the sequence of cause and effect as the indispensable preliminary of systematised knowledge. ·A heart that has loved has its own verifications of the belief that not even death can sever it from the object of its love. .

It is of course not to be supposed that these convictions will be stated and argued in anything like the way in which a mathematician, or a metaphysician, arrives at his conclusions. They are convictions rather than conclusions; or perhaps we shall speak most truly if we say that they are ·anticipations of conclusions, which the fine instinct of the poet has enabled him to foresee, and which his gift of persuasive expression enables him to help others also to foresee, as certain to be reached when, through many a lengthened process it may be, the whole of the truth of the matter shall have been heard and apprehended.

Taken as a whole then, *In Memoriam* is a plea for a larger knowledge which will include the reverent recognition of all the facts without us and within. It is an appeal for a patience and a faith that can wait until the contradictions

of the present shall be reconciled by the greater wisdom which is to be gained hereafter. It is more: it is a trembling overture to the vaster music which will yet be heard, when what now seem to be discords are resolved into their harmonies because all the parts, and not a few only, of Nature's great orchestra have been called into play.

5

We have attempted to describe the more strictly private and personal aims of *In Memoriam*, and also to indicate the larger and wider purposes which it was intended to fulfil. It only remains, in this Introduction, to say so much in regard to the form and structure of the poem as will enable the reader to follow its progress with as little difficulty as possible.

About the form there is not very much that needs to be said. The poem opens with a Prologue and closes with an Epilogue. For the rest it consists of 131 cantos of varying length. The metre throughout is the same: but the extraordinary skill with which it is employed, and the constantly varying effect produced by a change in the place of the accent, or of the length of the words and their arrangement in the line, effectually prevent any feeling of monotony, and leave the impression of a mode of speech exquisitely matched with the thought which it is designed to convey.

All speculation as to the source from which the form of the stanza was derived has been set at rest by the express statement of Tennyson himself. 'I had no notion,' he says, 'till 1880 that Lord Herbert of Cherbury had written his occasional verses in the same metre. I believed myself to have been the originator of the metre, until after *In*

Memoriam came out, when some one told me that Ben Jonson and Sir Philip Sidney had used it'.'

One evident advantage which results from the division of the poem into so large a number of sections is that the parts can be studied and appreciated for their own particular worth. We are constantly being arrested by the finished perfection of some cameo-like reproduction of social life or natural beauty. The delight of turning again and again to such gems is an experience familiar to us all.

It is however equally evident that such separate completeness in the individual parts may be not unlikely to cause us very considerable difficulty when we are attempting to master the connection of the poem as a whole. That such a difficulty is by no means an imaginary one is to be seen plainly enough from the strangely differing accounts which have been given of the order and development of the thought as it advances from stage to stage. Indeed the effect of not a few such attempts at analysis has been to make many readers sceptical as to the possibility of tracing any clear thread of continuity through the long series of poems.

[1] Some of the stanzas of Lord Herbert—George Herbert's brother—are so remarkably in the manner of Tennyson that a critic might be forgiven for supposing that 'the measure, the hint of the cadence, and indeed the whole cast of the metre' should have been taken from them. Compare for instance the following lines from *An Ode upon the Question whether Love should continue for ever :*

> For if no use of sense remain
> When bodies once this life forsake,
> Or they could no delight partake,
> Why should they ever rise again?

It is a curious fact that D. G. Rossetti wrote a poem entitled *My Sister's Sleep* in this same metre three years before the publication of *In Memoriam*. He also supposed that he had invented the metre.

Happily we have now Tennyson's own authority for distinguishing at least three well-defined landmarks in the course of the subject-matter. 'The divisions of the poem,' he says, 'are made by First Christmas Eve (section xxviii.), Second Christmas (lxxviii.), Third Christmas Eve (civ., cv.)[1].'

Taking then these landmarks as our guides, it follows that there are four chief divisions, or cycles, into which the main portion of the poem must fall. We naturally proceed to inquire whether any distinct character is to be recognised in each of these divisions such as would give it a clearly marked place in the unfolding of the general purpose.

The results of such an examination may be broadly stated thus[2].

The *First Cycle* (i—xxvii.) may be entitled GRIEF. It is entirely occupied with the thought of Sorrow and its bitterness. Mood after mood of misery is depicted in it. The emotions expend themselves upon any objects which serve to enable the stunned mind to realise its loss. Grief is seeking to justify its right to grieve.

The *Second Cycle* (xxviii—lxxvii.) marks the beginnings and records the conflicts of HOPE. Its Christmas falls 'sadly,' but is welcomed as bringing once again 'the light that shone when Hope was born.' This is the longest of all the divisions and in some respects the most important. It is here that, putting aside the aid of assistance from

[1] *Mem.* i. 305.

[2] It will be understood, of course, that the poet is to be held in no way responsible for the *titles* given to the four sections into which, in accordance with the arrangement which he himself indicated, the poem has been divided in the present edition. In the brief analysis here attempted nothing is said of the contents of the Dedicatory Prologue, the consideration of which is reserved to the Notes.

external authority, the struggler battles a way for himself through the doubts and perplexities which beset his mind and his conscience. Sometimes encouraged, sometimes driven well-nigh to despair, his feet fail beneath him but his heart refuses to yield. Even when 'falling' in weakness 'upon the great world's altar stairs' he can yet 'faintly trust the larger hope.' Nor will he consent to abandon the effort to reach a clearer light for his own and, it may be, his brethren's sake, if there be any among them who may care to listen to his words.

The *Third Cycle* (lxxviii—ciii.) conducts us to a happier region. It is the cycle of PEACE. Its Christmas falls 'calmly.' The mourner finds some comfort in thinking how his friend would have acted in his place. Gentler feelings are stirring within him, and the possibility of making other friendships can now be considered. Nature reflects the altered mood, and the old scenes can be revisited without pain. His mind even turns to the possibility of communion with the departed. The starting of friends for Vienna, and the necessity of leaving the old Somersby home, are incidents which occasion distress; but calm returns after a night vision in which Time and its Changes are seen to be only a preparation for the Eternal possession of all that on earth was really noblest and best.

The *Fourth* and concluding *Cycle* (civ—cxxxi.) raises our thoughts to a yet more exalted level. The old and familiar associations of the past have been exchanged for others which are entirely new. The Christmas Eve falls 'strangely.' But the change is useful and even indispensable. It opens the way for 'the closing cycle rich in good.' The watchword here is not Grief, nor merely Hope, nor even Peace, but JOY. Set free from the narrowing restraints of local

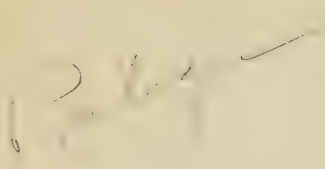
memories, the poet rises towards the apprehension of what is large and universal. He learns that the life of a solitary is no perfect type of life. He recalls the largeness and fulness of the nature of his friend. He realises that this friend is becoming more to him now that he can think of him as a presence everywhere. The desire for their future reunion has linked itself with the widest conceptions as to the ultimate development of the human race. The world is different. All is well—and will be better, in a Universe of which the controlling power is Love.

How complete is the recovery, and how real the victory with which the long struggle has been crowned, is shewn with a quite startling effect by the lightness and almost gaiety of the *Epilogue*. This consists of a marriage lay, filled with most joyous congratulation, in which the happiness of those who were about to be linked in the closest earthly relationship is thought of as dignified and ennobled by the assurance that every such true union is a seal and pledge of the mighty possibilities which await the fulfilment of God's great purposes for man.

So much then by way of introduction to the course to be travelled. In the Notes which follow the Text the student will find summaries of the contents of each of the cantos and explanations of the less obvious allusions and phrases. If he is wise he will make sparing use of these until at all events he has grappled for himself with the thought of the poet. The highest poetry calls for the exercise of all our highest powers: and the best help that can be given to any is the help that will encourage him to win the satisfaction and delight which can come to him only as the reward of exertions of his own.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII



Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

FIRST CYCLE. I—XXVII. GRIEF

I

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn.'

II

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou should'st fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd eyes;
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold:
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'
That 'Loss is common to the race'—
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'
Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking 'this will please him best,
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her colour burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain; a favourable speed
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night:
I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And travell'd men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies: O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying; 'Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?'
And circle moaning in the air:
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed;
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,
I do not suffer in a dream;
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day:
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
The cattle huddled on the lea;
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a labouring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI

What words are these have fall'n from me?
Can calm despair and wild unrest
Be tenants of a single breast,
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
The touch of change in calm or storm;
But knows no more of transient form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink?
And stunn'd me from my power to think
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan?

XVII

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week: the days go by:
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark;
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee;
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the mind:
'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find
Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
'How good! how kind! and he is gone.'

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
'This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth. 'Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad; her note is changed
Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow:

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
And, crown'd with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb;
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV.

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV

I know that this was Life,—the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest
To enrich the threshold of the night
With shower'd largess of delight
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new;
Why should they miss their yearly due
Before their time? They too will die.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambol'd, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet:
'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: 'They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four days?'
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;
He told it not; or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm
    Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,
    Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
    Her early Heaven, her happy views;
    Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
    Her hands are quicker unto good:
    Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
    In holding by the law within,
    Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,
'The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust':

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive':
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:
'Thou pratest here where thou art least;
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek:
'I am not worthy ev'n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said),

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd;
And loiter'd in the master's field,
And darken'd sanctities with song.'

XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,
    Tho' always under alter'd skies
    The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
    The herald melodies of spring,
    But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
    Survive in spirits render'd free,
    Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,—
What whisper'd from her lying lips?
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her boast,
Till even those that miss'd her most
Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher;
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim:
He still outstript me in the race;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the colour of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV

How fares it with the happy dead?
For here the man is more and more;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean springs),
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that 'this is I':

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'
And finds 'I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,
As thro' the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLVI

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;
The fruitful hours of still increase;
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching far;
Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good:
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

XLVIII

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
She takes, when harsher moods remit,
What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
But better serves a wholesome law,
And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shiver'd lance
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

L

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

LI

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved;
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'
The Spirit of true love replied;
'Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

'So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.
Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.'

LIII

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI

'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song:
Peace; come away: we do him wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind:
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell:
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day;
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LX

He past; a soul of nobler tone:
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by:
At night she weeps, 'How vain am I!
How should he love a thing so low?'

LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly character'd and slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a man;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

LXII

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
Then be my love an idle tale,
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labour of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands;
'Does my old friend remember me?'

LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With 'Love's too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight dies
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVIII*

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost:
The streets were black with smoke and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs:
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary hairs:
They call'd me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns:

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child:
I found an angel of the night;
The voice was low, the look was bright;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled:

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf:
The voice was not the voice of grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXX

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath:
I curse not nature, no, nor death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howsoe'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
And what are they when these remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him, who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways
Shall ring with music all the same;
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX

'More than my brothers are to me,'—
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves; the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he speaks;
He bears the burthen of the weeks
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,
'My love shall now no further range;
There cannot come a mellower change,
For now is love mature in ear.'

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
What end is here to my complaint?
This haunting whisper makes me faint,
'More years had made me love thee more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:
'My sudden frost was sudden gain,
And gave all ripeness to the grain,
It might have drawn from after-heat.'

LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth:
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year delaying long;
Thou doest expectant nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou should'st link thy life with one
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labour fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct by paths of growing powers
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;
And whether love for him have drain'd
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touch'd him and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
And show'd him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,
To wander on a darken'd earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindliest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
With gifts of grace, that might express
All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilising intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears:
The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
'Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain?'

And lightly does the whisper fall;
''Tis hard for thee to fathom this;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would say;
Or so shall grief with symbols play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odour streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:
I linger'd; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labour, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
O tell me where the senses mix,
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I—my harp would prelude woe—
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixt in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For 'ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge' he said 'in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man.'
We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

XC

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise:

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other hands;
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCII

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;
And tho' the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd:
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinaï's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
I look'd on these and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bliss:
She knows not what his greatness is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
'I cannot understand: I love.'

XCVIII

You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That City. All her splendour seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me:
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings:
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

C

I climb the hill: from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake;
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the labourer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades;
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CII

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, 'Yea, but here
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CIII

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dream'd a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me: distant hills
From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
The shape of him I loved, and love
For ever: then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learnt that I must go
They wept and wail'd, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore
And roll'd the floods in grander space,
The maidens gather'd strength and grace
And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw
From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:
'We served thee here,' they said, 'so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind?'

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, 'Enter likewise ye
And go with us': they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud
That landlike slept along the deep.

FOURTH CYCLE. CIV—CXXXI. JOY

CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand:
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows:
There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and mime;
For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
For who would keep an ancient form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years:
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CXI

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale:

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
Sprang up for ever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest made,
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with cries,
And undulations to and fro.

CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O, friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone;
And that dear voice, I once have known,
Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead;
Less yearning for the friendship fled,
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant labouring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:
    I think we are not wholly brain,
    Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
    Let Science prove we are, and then
    What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
    Hereafter, up from childhood shape
    His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things.

CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

CXXII

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice 'believe no more'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamour made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;
She did but look through dimmer eyes;
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fix'd in truth:

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and strong
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI

Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII

And all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags:
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade;
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new;
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil cöoperant to an end.

CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal;
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O TRUE and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years: they went and came,
Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee; they meet thy look
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she grows
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,
That shielded all her life from harm
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The 'wilt thou' answer'd, and again
The 'wilt thou' ask'd, till out of twain
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn;
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them—maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favour'd horses wait;
They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she look'd, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire:
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapour sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendour fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

PROLOGUE

The Prologue is a dedicatory prayer. It is dated, as if to shew that it expresses not simply an accepted belief from which the writer had started, but rather the painfully attained assurance to which his own experience has brought him.

Emboldened and humbled by all through which he has passed, he casts himself and his work at the feet of the One whom he dimly yet undoubtingly discerns to be the Love and the Life and the Light of the Universe. From this Being, once manifested before the eyes of men, but now to be apprehended by faith alone, we derive our existence and our hopes of a life beyond death: hopes which we cannot believe are to be disappointed. In Him we behold our ideal: and we are what we are, that we may freely surrender ourselves to Him. As yet He transcends our attempts to comprehend Him. We long for an increase of knowledge, but it must be knowledge which is joined with holy fear. We have need to be prepared for the light which unaided we dare not approach unto.

To this more general confession, the poet adds his own particular petition. Most humbly he asks forgiveness—for his best efforts no less than his worst: for his long unwillingness to yield his friend into the hands of the Creator and Perfecter; for the waywardness of his repinings and the misusings of his powers. Deeply conscious of shortcomings, he can but pray for a wisdom he does not possess.

'When questions were written' to Tennyson 'about Christ, he would reply, 'Answer for me that I have given my belief in *In Memoriam*' (*Mem.* i. 325).

With the statements of this belief in the Prologue should be compared others in cantos xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxvi, lii, lxxxiv, and cxxxi.

1 *Strong...Immortal;* answering perhaps to the more ordinary liturgical epithets 'Almighty' and 'Eternal.'

Immortal Love. When asked the meaning of these words, Tennyson explained that he had used 'Love' in the same sense as did St John in the 4th chapter of his First Epistle (*Mem.* i. 312, *note*). It is to be observed that the great conceptions of *Love*, *Life*, and *Light*, which meet us in this Prologue, are the characteristic ideas of the writings of St John.

This first and the next two stanzas have more than one expression in common with the following verse from George Herbert's poem entitled *Love* i.

> Immortal Love, authour of this great frame,
> Sprung from that beautie which can never fade;
> How hath man parcel'd out thy glorious name,
> And thrown it on that dust which thou hast made.

we that have not seen thy face; as distinguished from those who knew Him in the days of His flesh. Compare St John xx. 29, and 1 Pet. i. 8.

2 *these orbs of light and shade;* the planets, partly illuminated by the sun, and partly lying in shadow: cf. xxxiv. 2.

thy foot is on the skull; possibly a reference to the striking legend that the cross of the Redeemer was set up in the first Adam's grave. Many of the old painters have accordingly represented a skull at the foot of the cross.

The legend is at least as old as the time of St Jerome who, in his commentary on Eph. v. 14, says that he once heard a preacher explain to his congregation that this verse was 'addressed to Adam, who was buried on Calvary (the place of a skull) where the Lord was crucified. It was called the place of a skull because the head of the first man was buried there.'

3 *thou art just.* Both the thought and its expression find a parallel in the concluding words of George Herbert's *Discharge*:

> Away distrust:
> My God hath promis'd, he is just.

4 In Tennyson's view the freedom of the will is man's highest and divinest prerogative. Compare the conclusion of *De Profundis* ii.

this main-miracle, that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world.

5 *broken lights;* as of rays refracted by a prism, partial and differing according to the point of view. Compare the 'parcel'd out thy glorious name,' already quoted from Herbert.

6 *we trust it comes...let it grow;* 'it,' in each case, is knowledge, as is made plain by the following line.

7 In the poem *Love thou thy land* &c., already written by 1834, Tennyson had said:

Make knowledge circle with the winds;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men or growth of minds.

as before; before, that is, the discord which was introduced by doubt. Compare, 'At last he beat his music out' (xcvi. 3).

8 *thy vain worlds;* already referred to in the line 'Thine are these orbs of light and shade,' of stanza 2.

9 *since I began,* this elegy.

11 *Forgive these wild and wandering cries.*

The last of Petrarch's *canzoniere*, in honour of Laura de Stade, who in her lifetime and for years after her death was the object of the poet's tenderest and purest devotion, may conceivably have been in Tennyson's mind when he wrote this Prologue and more particularly the concluding stanza. Petrarch characteristically makes his address to the Blessed Virgin, and in it he says:

Lo, on my spirit's bended knees I pray,
That tow'rd a better end,
Thou may'st amend my misdirected way.
. . . . . .

Make my last tears devout
And pure throughout, though some were madness-born.
(Cayley's translation.)

At first sight it may appear strange—and the more so with the example of Petrarch before us—that Tennyson should place that which was really the outcome of the thought of his poem at its beginning and not at its end. Further consideration may shew that he was acting rightly in doing so. Had *In Memoriam* been a treatise chiefly addressed to the intellect, its conclusions would of course have been most fitly reserved to the end: but inasmuch as its appeal is primarily to the heart, the strongest and fullest disclosure of conviction is most effectively made at the outset.

This is the method of the highest art. The artist confronts us directly with his finished result, leaving us to analyse our impressions and to discover how his effect was produced by a subsequent process of inquiry and appreciation.

It may be also the method of the highest spiritual teaching. A striking instance of the use of it is to be seen in the 73rd Psalm, where the opening announcement, 'Truly God is loving unto Israel,' is followed, and eventually justified, by a detailed examination of difficulties which to the writer had made such a belief seem hard and at times well-nigh impossible.

FIRST CYCLE

I

Summary. I had been wont to accept the general principle that men may turn their troubles and failures to good account; but the particular application to my own case, I find to be very hard. Can there be any hope that a life could be enriched by the loss of that which has been its greatest good? There is indeed a sort of relief which may come by the lapse of time: but better far the most delirious grief than a peace which is merely the peace of oblivion.

1 *I held it truth;* note the past tense. Contrast 'I sometimes hold' (v. 1), and 'I hold it true' (xxvii. 4).

him who sings; 'I believe I alluded to Goethe. Among his last words were these: "Von Aenderungen zu höheren Aenderungen," "from changes to higher changes."' (*Mem.* ii. 391.)

The reference might almost equally well have been to Shakespeare: compare *Cymbeline*, iv. 2 (end),

> Be cheerful; wipe thine eyes:
> Some falls are means the happier to arise.

2 *interest;* result, fruit.

3 *Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd.* It seems to the sufferer that if he is to let Grief go it can only be by relinquishing Love. We speak of 'drowning grief,' but he feels that to drown grief must be to drown love as well.

4 The poet utterly rejects the suggestion 'you will get over it in time,' which is so often the first thought of consolation offered to sorrow.

With his resolution compare Shakespeare's *Sonnet* cxxiii.

No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change:
. . . . . .
Thy registers and thee I both defy.

II

So great is my horror of inconstancy, that I feel as if I could envy the churchyard yew its unchanging gloom.

1 For the phraseology compare Job viii. 17, 'His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.'

2 *in the dusk of;* i.e. in the shadow of.
the clock; in the tower of the church.

3 *not for thee the glow, the bloom.* While spring and autumn bring their glories to the other trees the yew seems to maintain its aspect of sadness. In a later canto (xxxix), subsequently inserted, the poet, when himself in a brighter mood, makes some modification of this perhaps too general statement. But even the language here does not justify the interpretation which has been sometimes put upon it. As has been truly said, 'It is inconceivable that so minute an observer, who in another place speaks of the fruit, can have been so ignorant as to suppose that the tree does not flower...The difficulty which has beset the general reader is in great measure caused by overlooking the dicœcious habit of the tree; the pollen being on one tree, and the berry on the other' (Lowe's *Yew Trees of Great Britain*, quoted by Stephen Gwynn in his *Tennyson*, p. 125).

4 *Sick for;* sick, i.e., with envy and longing for.

III

And yet I have misgivings as to the companionship of Sorrow. Sorrow would wish to clothe nature in her own hopelessness, and would interpret all its meaning as but the echo of her own despair. It may be that her overtures ought to be resisted as we should resist the approach of some foul contagion.

1 *Priestess in the vaults of death.* Possibly there is an allusion to the Cumæan Sibyl through whose cave Æneas passed into the regions of the departed (*Æn.* vi. 35, 98—100).

2 *blindly run;* as if all things were ruled by chance.

A web; the emblem of fatalism.

waste places...dying sun. The emphasis laid by modern science on the utter vastness of space, and on the fact that the heat of our central sun is steadily diminishing, has a tendency to increase the sense of desolation and despair.

4 *a vice of blood.* The contrast with 'my natural good' of the line preceding suggests that we are to understand the expression to mean an abnormal ill. Sorrow, in this view, would be regarded as a thing which human nature in a healthy condition must regard with instinctive aversion. The poet raises the question whether after all this may not be a truer view than any theory according to which good might be expected from grief.

IV

I try sleep, but get no relief. When the will resigns its function the other faculties remain at work with lowered vitality, chilled and clouded by a vague apprehension that something has gone very wrong. It is matter for thankfulness when the will is aroused and asserts itself once more.

3 *Break*, and so put an end to the intolerable strain.

shaken into frost. The temperature of still water may be reduced below freezing point without its being frozen: but at the least motion the water expands into ice, and breaks the glass.

4 *below the darken'd eyes;* as if floating between the retina and the brain of the recumbent sleeper.

V

Though words can do but scant justice to our deepest feelings, yet the effort of composition soothes; and expression is to the soul what drugs and garments are to the body.

1 Like some wise artist, Nature gives,
Thro' all her works, to each that lives
A hint of somewhat unexprest.

Unpublished poem in *Mem.* i. 145.

3 *weeds;* in the sense in which we speak of 'widow's weeds.' (A.S. *waede*, garment.)

VI

Letters begin to arrive: but the conventional consolations singularly fail. To say that others also suffer is only to increase the tragedy: while to hint that substitutes may yet be found to fill the vacant place is utterly to misunderstand what we were to one another. As well speak so to the maiden suddenly bereft of her betrothed.

1 Compare *Hamlet*, i. 2:

Queen. Thou know'st 'tis common; all that live must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.
Hamlet. Ay, madam, it is common.

4 *vast and wandering.* This combination of epithets occurs in Shakespeare (*Rich. III.* i. 4).

7 *ranging;* arranging.

In the course of some reminiscences of Tennyson, referring to the year 1841, Edmund Lushington writes: 'I remember one particular night when we were sitting up together late in his bedroom. He began to recite the poem that stands sixth in *In Memoriam*, "One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'" and I do not know that the deep melodious thunder of his voice with all its overwhelming pathos, often and often as I have heard it, ever imprest me more profoundly.' (*Mem.* i. 202.) 'Generally when asked to read the poem he would refuse, saying, "It breaks me down, I cannot."' (*Ibid.* p. 436.)

For an example of what Tennyson himself could write to a mourner, see 'To J. S.' (James Spedding, on the death of his brother) published in December 1832. Note in particular the lines:

I will not say, 'God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind';
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

VII

Feeling that I must *do* something, I make my way in the morning dusk to the house where he lived, only to be made more conscious by outward sights and sounds of the utter desolation of it all.

1 The Hallams lived at 67 Wimpole St.

2 *like a guilty thing;* an allusion no doubt to the description of the ghost in *Hamlet* starting at the cock-crow.

3 Notice the effect of wearisome length produced by the hard alliteration, the monosyllables, and the halting rhythm in the last line.

VIII

Equally forlorn is every place where he was and is not. Happily he cared for my verses. If they come to nothing, at all events their supreme effort shall be to commemorate him.

The volume of 1832 had been received with some very severe criticism. For Hallam's enthusiastic estimate of his friend's powers, see *Remains*, pp. 303—305.

IX

But before the tomb can be adorned, the body must return to occupy it. May the ship that brings the precious burden speed most gently on its way!

1 The resemblance between this invocation and that in which Horace appeals to the vessel which was to bring Virgil home was probably not unintentional.

> Navis, quæ tibi creditum
> Debes Virgilium, finibus Atticis
> Reddas incolumem, precor;
> Et serves animæ dimidium meæ.
>
> (*Odes*, i. 3.)

Fair ship. It is perhaps no matter for regret that all attempts to discover the name of the vessel are said to have been unsuccessful.

2 The faster the ship was driven through the water, the more ruffled would be the reflexion of the mast.

3 *Phosphor;* lit. light-bringer, the morning star: a name given by the Greeks to the planet Venus.

X

The vision of the home-bound ship, and the thought of what would happen to the dead man if it went down in mid-ocean, strengthens the sentiment which pleads for a last resting-place in a quiet English grave.

4 i.e. either outside in the churchyard, or inside in the chancel.

Compare Burke's words: 'I would rather sleep in the southern corner of a little country churchyard, than in the tomb of the Capulets' (Letter in Prior's *Life*, p. 33).

XI

Meantime the death-like stillness of autumn, exquisitely beautiful though everything is, imparts if any peace only the peace of despair; and suggests to the pre-occupied mind the thought that the ship may be becalmed at sea.

2 A Lincolnshire wold from which the whole range of the marsh to the sea was visible.

3 *bounding;* i.e. limiting: so 'bounding sky' in xvii. 2.

Of the scene pictured in this quatrain it has been said: 'That far landscape to which Shelley or Wordsworth would have allotted twenty or thirty lines, is done in four.'

Such a remark recalls the admission of Ruskin: 'No description that I have ever given of anything is worth four lines of Tennyson; and in serious thought, my half-pages are generally only worth about as much as a single sentence of his.'

XII

Whilst my body rests my spirit is off, like a carrier pigeon, straight for the ship to circle round it in reverie. It is coming, but how sadly!

1 The dove, the ark, and the return are suggested by the story of Noah's messenger; although the errand is a widely different one.

message knit below; i.e. fastened underneath.

3 *ocean-mirrors rounded large;* the circles of water as seen from above bounded by the horizon.

5 *the body;* the 'mortal ark' to which the dove returns.

XIII

Tears flow afresh as the terrible void is gradually realised. And yet, so strange does it all appear that it will need time to convince the imagination that the whole is not a dream.

1 Compare Milton's *Sonnet* xxiii.

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
. . . . . .
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

XIV

Such indeed is the bewilderment caused by grief, that were I told even now that the ship had arrived, and were I to see him step from it in perfect health and hear him speak and hint that my brain had become disordered—I should not be altogether surprised.

3 *The man I held as half-divine.*

Elsewhere Tennyson wrote, 'He was as near perfection as mortal man could be' (*Mem.* i. 38).

XV

This stormy evening—if only I could be certain that the wished-for vessel was not a sufferer by it—would be entirely congenial to my stormy soul.

1 *from yonder dropping day;* i.e. from the West.

Could the feeling of a sunset gale in late autumn be more perfectly reproduced by words than in these first two stanzas?

Note 'the forest, the waters, the meadows, struck out each in a word; and the wildness of the wind and the width of the landscape given, as Turner would have given them, by the low shaft of storm-shaken sunlight dashed from the West right across to the East.' S. A. Brooke.

3 *thy;* i.e. the ship's.

5 *a labouring breast;* so Marlowe, 'yon labouring cloud' (*Dr Faustus*, ad fin.).

XVI

Are these alternations of contradictory feeling merely the surface moods of grief, or—horrible thought—can it be that the shock has entirely deranged me!

1 *calm despair and wild unrest;* he is citing his own words from cantos xi and xv.

XVII

Blessings for ever be on the good ship which has performed its part so well!

2 *Thro' circles of the bounding sky;* compare xii. 3.

3 *like a line of light;* as flashed from a lighthouse.

4 *balmy drops;* i.e. of dew: compare the 'dewy decks' of ix. 3.

XVIII

There is comfort in the knowledge that he is to be laid to rest amid home-like surroundings: but how gladly even now would I impart to him, if I might, my failing life. This, if it is not to fail altogether, must support itself upon his memory.

1 *The violet.* So Hamlet says of Ophelia:

> Lay her i' the earth;—
> And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
> May violets spring! (Act v. 1.)

2 *familiar names;* those of the Eltons, his mother's family.

4 *falling on his faithful heart;* Elisha-like, cf. 2 Kings iv. 34.

The corpse was landed at Dover. The hearse and three mourning coaches were drawn—in those days before railroads—by 16 black horses all the way to Clevedon in Somerset. The tenant farmers on the estate were the bearers. The burial took place at 1 p.m. on Jan. 3, 1834. The day was fine.

Tennyson himself could not face the ordeal of the funeral, and as a matter of fact did not visit the grave until 1850.

XIX

As the tidal waters of the Severn, at the full, stifle the sounds of the inflowing Wye, so there are deep waters of sorrow which make utterance impossible. Only in the intervals when these abate, a little can be said.

1 *The Danube to the Severn;* i.e. Vienna to Clevedon.

St Andrew's Church, half a mile to the south of Clevedon, stands on a lonely hill overlooking a wide expanse of water where the Severn flows into the Bristol Channel. From the

churchyard the sound of the tide can be heard as it washes the cliffs not a hundred yards away. The Wye is nearly opposite. The river is full of little rapids. With the rising of the tide the waterfalls are submerged and silenced.

These stanzas were written at Tintern.

XX

The servants in a desolated home may speak of the master who is dead, while the children are mute in their misery. These last are like the deeper griefs which refuse to find relief in expression.

How true to the life is this sketch of the effects of bereavement! Note that the servants are counting their losses while the children are thinking of the lost. We are conscious of a chilliness creeping over us as we read stanzas 4 and 5.

XXI

I know that to some these songs will seem weakly sentimental, and that others will think me posing, or at best utterly out of touch with the times. All I can reply is that they never knew him, or they would know that I have really no option but to mourn as I do.

5 It will be remembered that in *Locksley Hall* the sufferer finds his consolation in the interests opened to him by the discoveries and forecasts of Science.

the latest moon. It has been suggested that the reference here is to the discovery of Neptune, in 1846. But the term 'moon' could not with any propriety be applied to Neptune, and it is scarcely likely that this canto was written as late as 1846.

Quite a number of moons—satellites of planets—were discovered about the middle of the century (all after 1840). It is possible that Tennyson may have had some of them in his mind.

It is tempting to imagine that the allusion is to *spectrum analysis*, but this was not employed as a method of interrogating nature until 1859.

As an instance of the unfavourable criticism anticipated in this canto, we may quote an extract from a letter by Edward Fitzgerald written in Jan. 1845: 'A. T. has near a volume of poems—elegiac,—in memory of Arthur Hallam. Don't you think the world wants other notes than elegiac now? *Lycidas* is the utmost length an elegiac should reach. But Spedding praises, and I suppose the elegiacs will see daylight, public daylight, one day.' (Dixon's *Primer of Tennyson*, p. 74.)

XXII

It was a delightsome path which led us down, when we least expected it, into the valley of the Shadow of Death; where I am now left, but only I could hope for a little while, to journey alone.

1 *four sweet years;* 1828—1832.

3 *the fifth autumnal slope;* of the year 1833.

XXIII

So near a view of Death does but make more vivid the memories of a past which was richly filled with bright and beautiful life.

2 *falling lame, and looking back.* The poet seems to falter between his desire to reach on to the understanding of the supernatural mysteries and his wistful regret for the days when he felt the need of little more than Nature had to offer in the golden dawn of poetry and philosophy.

3 *Pan;* the woodland deity of hills and flocks.

6 *Argive;* strictly 'connected with the city of Argos,' and then as here, more generally, 'Greek.'

Arcady; 'Arcadia,' the ideal land of pastoral poetry.

XXIV

Can it be that it is merely distance which lends enchantment to that past?

1 *wandering isles of night;* spots in the sun.

2 *Since our first Sun arose and set.* Until 1878 this line had stood 'Since Adam left his garden yet.' The awkwardness of the final 'yet' was doubtless the reason for the alteration.

In all, 62 changes have been made in the poem since its publication in 1850; but comparatively few of them are of any importance.

XXV

Nay, but it was real and very matter-of-fact life; only its tasks and trials were made delightful and easy by the companionship of love.

For the thought of this canto we may compare the well known passage from Bacon's Essay, 'Of Friendship';

'But one thing is most Admirable which is that this Communicating of a Mans self to his Frend works two contrarie effects: For it redoubleth Joyes, and cutteth Griefes in Halfes. For there is no Man, that imparteth his Joyes to his Frend, but he joyeth the more: And no Man that imparteth his Griefes to his Frend but hee grieveth the lesse.'

XXVI

Now but one mournful purpose nerves me to go on: the wish to prove the constancy of love—else let me die, this night.

1 *canker;* eat away, cause to decay.

3 *in Him is no before;* compare *Paradise Lost*, iii. 77 :

God beholding from his prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future he beholds.

the indifference to be; the indifference, i.e. which is hereafter to be developed in what at present appears as love.

4 *Then might I;* optative : then would that I might.

proper (Lat. *proprius*), i.e. own. 'My proper scorn' is equivalent to 'my scorn of myself.'

XXVII

But however great my suffering may be, I am certain that it is vastly to be preferred to any contentment which is due merely to a lack of sensibility.

4 *I hold it true, whate'er befall;* this is the deliberate conclusion of this section of the poem. We may contrast the 'I held it truth' with which it opened.

loved and lost. The poet probably intends an allusion to his first use of these words in i. 4. It is of interest also to note that these are the concluding words of an epitaph which Henry Hallam, the historian, placed in Clevedon Church to commemorate his wife, who died in 1840. 'Her husband,' so the inscription states, 'placed this third tablet to the memory of those whom he loved and lost.' The first and second tablets were those of Arthur Henry Hallam, and Eleanor Hallam (who died in 1837).

Here we complete the First Cycle, that of Grief. It has been exclusively occupied with attempts to realise the fact of the great loss, and with the analysis of feeling in regard to it. From this point onwards the mind of the bereaved man begins to look towards the future and its possibilities, and with this change of attitude love no longer confines itself within the

limits of grief. 'What is grief but love itself restricted to acts of memory and longing for its other tasks—imprisoned in the past and striving vainly to be free?' (Dr Martineau, *Endeavours after the Christian Life*, p. 247).

We are now to watch the working of love as it essays its other tasks, and passes beyond the region of mere regret. In doing so, we shall find that it passes also from merely personal considerations to concern itself increasingly with the more universal aspects of the problem which the removal of Hallam had presented. So much is this the case that Tennyson once said of the poem to a friend, 'It is rather the cry of the human race than mine. In the poem altogether private grief swells out into the thought of, and hope for, the world.' (See article by Mr Knowles in *Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1893.)

SECOND CYCLE

XXVIII

Christmas has come, in misty gloom. The greetings of the bells, as they rise and fall, bring even to my sorrowful soul something of the familiar gladness of long ago.

2 *four hamlets round.* When a shepherd in the neighbourhood of Somersby was asked 'What peal of bells do you hear best here on a Christmas night, if the night is still?' he replied, 'The bells we möastlins consider to hear is Telford, Hagg, Langton, and Ormsby.' (Rawnsley's *Memories of the Tennysons*, p. 12.)

As we read this and the following quatrain, eyes are indeed changed into ears!

5 *Yule;* Christmas time. A.S. *geól*, connected with a verb *gýlan*, to make merry.

XXIX

Grief for the guest that comes no more may well bear tenderly with the old customs which equally with itself are opposed to change.

It is interesting to compare, and contrast, the thought of this canto with the following:

> We'll keep our customs. What is law itself
> But old establish'd custom? What religion
> (I mean with one half of the men that use it)
> Save the good use and wont that carries them
> To worship how and when their fathers worshipp'd?
> All things resolve to custom. We'll keep ours.

Scott (*Pirate*, chap. 14), quoted by Dr Gatty in his *Key to 'In Memoriam.'*

XXX

It was sad work. We tried to play the old games and to sing the old song. There was something unearthly about it. Our thoughts could not but turn to the dead: nor could we be content to think of them as unaware and unconcerned. Nay, we could dare to assert that they were living as ever, only with larger sympathy and keener insight. With such thoughts we could welcome the great Festival which is the Birthday of Hope.

4 *echo-like our voices rang;* that is to say, what we sang was but a spiritless repetition.

Last year. This gives the present date as Christmas 1833.

6 The first reference in the body of the poem to the hope of immortality.

7 *From orb to orb;* cf. Prologue, 2.

from veil to veil. As spirit can operate anywhere, so can it penetrate anything.

XXXI

There was a family circle once that did receive back its dead to life again. How we could wish to have heard their questions and answers! But answers there are none.

1 Do the dead know what is going on here?

2 What are they doing there?

XXXII

Nay, in all probability there were no questions. In moments of deepest emotion there are no words and few thoughts. The soul is absorbed in contemplation, and seeks to find vent for its feelings in acts of devotion rather

than to engage in speculative investigations. With Mary even love for her brother was superseded by the overpowering sense of that Love which had done so much for him and for her. And is not that the best and truest life in which curious questionings and doubts disappear before the realised certainties of worship and devotion?

1 The reference is to Mary the sister of Lazarus, and to the incident described by St John (xii. 3).

3 *All subtle thought, all curious fears.* 'Of immortality the soul when well employed is incurious. It is so well, that it is sure it will be well. It asks no questions of the Supreme Power.' Emerson.

Borne down by gladness...she bows. It is a beautiful interpretation of the action.

4 *Whose loves in higher love endure.* Though at first sight it might look as if the earthly affection were lost in the higher devotion which for the while had power to 'supersede' it, yet in reality it was but ennobled and rendered more permanent.

For the same thought very beautifully expressed, and with greater fulness, compare the description of the worshipper who

Gazed one moment on the Face Whose beauty
Wakes the world's great hymn;
Felt it one unutterable moment
Bent in love o'er him;
In that look felt heaven, earth, men, and angels,
Distant grow and dim;
In that look felt heaven, earth, men, and angels,
Nearer grow through Him.

(Mrs Rundle Charles: *The Chorister and the Angel.*)

XXXIII

Let the superior faith of criticism deal tenderly and reverently with the faith of uncriticism. This with its happy simplicity and gracious activity is no less sincere, and is more quickly responsive to the demands upon it, than the other which has learnt to dispense with the aid of forms. Who knows whether the sight of just such simple faith may not after all be the one argument that will come to his rescue in some future stress of doubt or temptation?

4 Compare Emerson's

Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbour's creed hath lent.

XXXIV

And assuredly intellect, whatever else it may dispense with, cannot relinquish the hope of Immortality. Without this we could give no rational account of the world—Art, Religion, and Morality would cease to have either meaning or value. Life on such terms would not be worth keeping.

2 *orb of flame;* at a more distant view the 'green' earth is a fiery planet.

4 If final extinction is all we have to wait for, why wait? A South African snake—*bucephalus Capensis*—attracts birds into its jaws, drawing them by an irresistible fascination.

With Tennyson's verdict here may be compared the following written half a century later:

'If naturalism is to hold the field, the feelings and opinions inconsistent with naturalism must be foredoomed to suffer change; and how, when that change shall come about, it can do otherwise than cut all nobility out of our conception of conduct and all worth out of our conception of life, I am wholly unable to understand.' A. J. Balfour, *Foundations of Belief*, p. 31.

XXXV

It is useless to say that, even if we knew for certain that there is to be no other life, yet the presence of Love would make this one worth having. No, for Love under sentence of death would not be love as we understand it. It would be deprived of half its vitality, if indeed it did not degenerate into mere animal passion.

2 *so sweet a thing;* i.e. as thee.

3 *Æonian;* of age-long duration. The word was apparently invented by Tennyson as a translation of the Gk *αἰώνιος*, 'eternal.' He uses it again in XCV. 11.

4 *sound of that forgetful shore:* compare Milton's

> sleepy drench
> Of that forgetful lake.

6 A mere wood-devil.
batten'd; grown fat.

XXXVI

The fact that it is thus possible for us to discover for ourselves these and other such fundamental principles of human life, does not lessen our indebtedness to that Incarnate Wisdom Who gave them fullest expression and made them the common property of all.

3 *And so the Word had breath.*
'Ideas are often poor ghosts: our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them: they pass athwart us in their vapour and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh: they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad, sincere eyes and speak to us in appealing tones: they are

clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame' (George Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 'Janet's Repentance,' chap. 19).

This is truly and strikingly said; and it is instructive to compare the attempts of poet and prose-writer to express what are in many respects the same thoughts in about the same number of words.

4 *wild eyes that watch;* even the savage islanders of the Pacific.

It will be observed that in this canto Tennyson is harking back to what he had said, in xxxiii, about a faith which professed to be indifferent to any sort of outward embodiment of religious conceptions. Here he is vindicating the worth of such embodiment in its supreme example.

Note also that he is still dealing with the truth which is commemorated at the Christmas Festival.

XXXVII

But here the poet feels himself suddenly checked and rebuked for presuming to invade the high domain of Theology, and explains that he has been led to the trespass by following out a train of thought which had been commended to him by his friend and master.

1 *Urania;* strictly the Muse of Astronomy, but used here, as in Milton (e.g. *Paradise Lost*, vii. 1), for the 'Heavenly' or Sacred Muse.

2 His laurels were to be sought on a much lowlier level.

Parnassus; the mountain in Greece which was sacred to Apollo and the Muses; hence, the domain of poetry generally.

3 *Melpomene;* the Muse of Tragedy, to whom it belonged to sing of human loves and human losses.

5 *dear to me as sacred wine.* This in the 1st edition had stood 'dear as sacramental wine.'

For a remarkable example of Hallam's theological speculation, see the concluding Essay in the published volume of *Remains*, entitled *Theodicæa Novissima.*

And for another poet's estimate of the limits of his proper sphere, compare the following by Coventry Patmore (Preface to *The Rod, the Root, and the Flower*):

'I make no ridiculous pretence of invading the province of the theologian by defining or explaining dogma. This I am content with implicitly accepting; my work being mainly that of the Poet, bent only upon discovering and reporting how the "loving hint" of doctrine has "met the longing guess" of the souls who have so believed in the Unseen that it has become visible, and who have thenceforward found their existence to be no longer a sheath without a sword, a desire without fulfilment.'

XXXVIII

Accepting the rebuff as merited, I return sadly to the main road from which I had been tempted to stray. For the time hope seems to have faded and comfort to have disappeared. Only a single ray of consolation comes to relieve my depression. It is just possible that my friend may know, and care to know, that he is the subject of my singing.

2 The spring comes to the natural world, but the winter remains in his soul.

blowing; blossoming.

It is not difficult to see that the experience here described was a necessary and profitable one. The previous growth had been too rapid to be lasting or really fruitful. The sap must go down again to make more root and wood. The gain of this winter-stage will appear later on.

XXXIX

Revisiting the churchyard now in the spring-time I find that the yew, whose constancy of gloom I had once admired, is shewing signs of happier life. I see that Sorrow had tried to paint it blacker than it is. Even so dark a thing has its interval of brightness.

1 *fruitful cloud and living smoke;* the pollen rising from the staminal flowers of the tree. The epithets 'fruitful' and 'living' are therefore most accurately applied.

For a parallel description see *The Holy Grail* (lines 13 and foll.):

> a world-old yew-tree, darkening half
> The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
> That puff'd the swaying branches into smoke.

3 *What whisper'd.* The past tense points back to the view which he had formerly been led to take: see ii. 3. The last two lines are not in inverted commas, and do not therefore represent a statement made by Sorrow. They rather express what is the actual state of the case.

kindled at the tips; the young shoots being of a brighter green.

The allusion here, and in canto ii, is not to the Clevedon churchyard. In that there is no yew-tree: the poet moreover did not visit it until 1850.

This canto was written in April 1868 at Farringford in the Isle of Wight. It first appeared in the edition of 1872: see note on ii.

XL

Can death be but the spirit's bridal, by which those who leave us enter upon a richer and more beneficent life? But alas, while here the bride may be heard of and may revisit her old home, he will never come back to me.

5 Originally the third line stood, 'In such great offices as suit.' When reading it in this form Tennyson remarked, 'I hate that—I should not write so now—I'd almost rather sacrifice a meaning than let two *s*'s come together.'

8 *My paths;* compare xxxviii. 1.

XLI

And the terrible fear comes at times that we may never be really united again. With the progress of his spirit here it was not impossible to keep pace, but there he must already have made such advance that I may never be able to make up the distance between us. Would indeed that at this moment I could flash to his side!

3 *Deep folly!* i.e., even to dream of the possibility of such a thing.

6 *the secular to-be;* the ages to come. Latin *secularis* from *seculum*, an age. Compare word 'æonian' (xxxv. 3).

Arthur Hallam himself had written to Tennyson, in 1829:

> There is another world . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Oh, may we recognise each other there,
> My bosom friend! May we cleave to each other
> And love once more together! Pray for me
> That such may be the glory of our end.

Remains, 'Meditative Fragments,' i.

XLII

However it is to be remembered that we were never really equals here, and yet we could be united. It is a comfort to think that what happened here may happen there. What a joy to be his disciple once more!

2 *A lord of large experience;* i.e. a master of new knowledge which he has acquired under his new conditions of existence.

the mind; i.e. my mind.

XLIII

Or again, what if death be indeed a sleep, and the souls in Paradise like fast closed flowers at night? Then I should find him what he was when we parted.

Tennyson's own note in explanation of this canto was as follows: 'If the immediate life after death be only sleep, and the spirit between this life and the next should be folded like a flower in a night slumber, then the remembrance of the past might remain, as the smell and colour do in the sleeping flower; and in that case the memory of our love would last as true, and would live pure and whole within the spirit of my friend until after it was unfolded at the breaking of the morn, when the sleep was over' (*Mem.* ii. 421).

3 *garden.* An allusion is no doubt intended to the original meaning of the word Paradise (*παράδεισος*, used in the LXX. for the 'garden' of Eden).

4 *prime;* from Lat. *prima* (sc. *hora*, hour), the beginning or first period of anything; so the Spring, or (as here) the Morning.

XLIV

Or is it that the dead retain only such an indistinct knowledge of their life here as a man has of his earliest infancy? Even so there might be occasional flashes of recollection. Would that these might lead to inquiry and fuller information!

1 *here.* This word seems to limit the experiences described to our present earthly life, and so to preclude the idea that the poet is thinking of any possible Intimations of an ante-natal existence, such as Wordsworth had described in his famous *Ode.*

is more and more; is continually advancing from stage to stage. Compare the line in *Locksley Hall*, 'And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.'

the doorways of his head; the two membranous spaces on the roof of the skull which are converted into bone at the end of the second year of life.

3 *so taste;* as to admit of this measure of remembrance.

XLV

Of course if the soul does not retain its personal identity, all such hopes are vain: but it would seem as if one chief purpose of this limited life in the body were the attainment of a definite self-consciousness, with the consequent possibility of memory. We can scarcely think that all this is to go for nothing, as would be the case if the lesson has to be learned over again after death.

1 The baby's earliest years, referred to in xliv, are forgotten because consciousness has not been developed.

4 It is probably not over bold to say that this suggestion, that one chief aim of our present existence is to secure the realisation of personal consciousness in preparation for a life to come, was an original contribution to metaphysics.

For a striking restatement of the argument in philosophical language, see Dr Martineau's *Study of Religion*, ii. p. 342.

'Once at least have we been disengaged from the infinite, and emerged from non-existence. In comparison with this, is it not a small thing to emerge from Death? For there is now, at all events, the ready-made Ego, the established unit of formed character and practised powers, instead of blank nothingness, a mere zero of potentiality: there is no need to provide both field and agent: let the field be reopened, and the agent is there.'

XLVI

For us who are forward-bound it is best that the past should for the most part fade from view: but by the departed in the calm light of eternity all may be safely seen. May the whole of my life appear rose-tinted with the hues of love!

1 *this lower track;* of our earthly life.

3 *those five years;* 1828—1833.

4 The point of view is that of the departed friend. The poet protests against the limitation which would result if their love should seem to have part in no more than five years of the retrospect: and asks that Love may be as a star over-hanging the entire 'landscape' and filling it with light and warmth 'from marge to marge.'

not large; if it included no more than those.

XLVII

The notion that individuality is to be merged into a universal impersonal life is abhorrent to Love. We crave for recognition and intercourse in a future state. At the very least we require that there should be a last opportunity of embracing and farewell.

1 *his rounds;* as of an orbit.
The skirts; the distinctive outlines.
should fall; as planets might into a sun.
3 *He seeks;* i.e. Love seeks.

XLVIII

Of course such deep questions require for their solution a much more serious handling than can be attempted here. Sorrow has little mind for formal investigations. She is content to spend her lighter intervals in the effort to secure for Love the benefit of the doubt in any discussions that may arise. She dreads to sound the depths of feeling too seriously and dares adventure little that is not slight and superficial.

In this canto it is evidently the poet's intention to offer an apology to Philosophy, as previously he had apologised to Theology, for seeming to invade its province.

XLIX

The critic might not look so severely at this light play upon the surface of things, did he but know how deep are the waters of the distress that lies all unreached and unrelieved below.

L

From the criticism of others I return to him who is a very necessity of my being. Oh, to have him at my side when life is a wearisome burden, or a fierce delirium; when human nature seems most despicable and most irritating: and when at last I sink exhausted in the darkness which must come before the dawn!

Hitherto the poet's utmost hope had been that his friend might still remember him and possibly even be aware of his distress. Now he becomes bolder and yearns for his actual presence and aid.

2 *scattering dust;* possibly, the sands of the hour-glass; in which case the idea is that of reckless wasting of opportunity. Or perhaps the mad scattering of dust is intended to represent the very antithesis to a wise building up of solid structures.

LI

But is it not too bold a thing to wish that the dead should be near us and see us through and through? Might they not cease to love us altogether? Nay, we need not be afraid: with their larger knowledge they have acquired a larger tolerance.

3 *Shall love be blamed for want of faith?* We do injustice to their love if we imagine that they have no power of seeing even in our failures the possibility of better things.

Here we enter upon the stage at which to intellectual problems are added the yet more terrible difficulties that start up in the light of the consciousness of sin.

LII

Far more disquieting than the fear of forfeiting his love, is the knowledge of the inadequacy of any love which I can offer in return. But even to this misgiving there comes a suggestion of comfort. No soul attains its ideal here, or at once: but there is a process at work the result of which will be seen hereafter when the precious has been sifted from the base.

3 Not even those who devote themselves to the holiest of all ideals are secured from failure thereby.

4 *is gather'd in;* a prophetic present.

LIII

There are indeed cases in which it might almost be argued that a certain amount of evil had in some sense prepared the way for good. But clearly there is need of the utmost caution in applying such a doctrine. It is one thing to philosophise optimistically about what is past, and quite another thing to allow any such considerations to be an excuse for want of strictness in the present. Once begin to confuse the outlines of good and evil, and the road slopes downwards fast.

2 Compare Shakespeare's expression of a popular belief:

> They say best men are moulded out of faults,
> And for the most become much more the better,
> For being a little bad.

3 'The needs-be of evil is truth in retrospect, falsehood and perilous in prospect.' F. W. Robertson.

Tennyson's own commentary, when reading these stanzas to a friend, was: 'There's a passionate heat of nature in a

rake sometimes. The nature that yields emotionally may come straighter than a prig's. Yet don't you be making excuses for this kind of thing—it's unsafe. You must set a rule before youth.'

4 *divine Philosophy.* The expression is Milton's; see *Comus*, 475, where the immediate reference is to a passage containing teaching derived from Plato.

LIV

Ah! this problem of evil. There is something within us which makes us certain that all imperfections, even wilful wrong-doing, all that looks like waste, all useless-seeming sufferings, are but steps in a great process of ultimate and universal good: but how dark it all is, and what very babes are we!

1 'Out of the human heart a vague cry anticipates the final eduction of good from evil.' F. W. Robertson.

5 *infant;* in the literal sense of 'infans,' one unable to speak.

crying for the light. Goethe died with the cry 'Open the windows that I may get more light.'

LV

If there is anything Divine within us, it would seem to be this longing that ultimate good might come to all. And that is why it is so staggering to find Nature acting with a reckless disregard of individual well-being. Indeed I can but cry with my voice to the Power above Nature whom my fainting heart still hopes is good to all.

The poet has been facing difficulty after difficulty which met him on the path of unaided effort to which he had resigned

himself after the rebuff of canto xxxvii. He has fought for the right to hope, with some brilliant displays of philosophical fencing; and has held his own, though greatly humbled, against the fears which arose out of his deepening sense of personal unworthiness. Such doubts and misgivings have had to be reckoned with by thinkers and sufferers in every age. But now he is brought face to face with the worse than doubt and misgiving which must sooner or later confront those whose lot has been cast in a time which, like our own, has been chiefly characterised by the progress of physical science. Like many another after him he has to discover, if he can, a way of escape from conclusions which seem to lead inevitably to denial and despair.

1 *Derives;* originates, springs. The intransitive use is rare.

3 *of fifty seeds...but one.* The proportion is often much greater. In the case of the early purple orchis it sometimes happens that out of 200,000 seeds not more than one grows up.

Similarly Leeuwenhök has asserted that the roe of a cod will contain eight or nine millions of eggs, not more than two of which on an average reach the same state of development as the parent fish.

Throughout Tennyson's life, so his son tells us, 'he was occasionally much troubled with the intellectual problem of the apparent profusion and waste of life, and by the vast amount of sin and suffering throughout the world; for these seemed to militate against the idea of the Omnipotent and All-loving Father' (*Mem.* i. 313).

5 *dust and chaff;* so unsatisfactory seem all the proffered explanations.

faintly trust the larger hope; 'that the whole human race would through, perhaps, ages of suffering, be at length purified and saved, even those who now "better not with time"' (*Mem.* i. 322).

LVI

But indeed the worst of Nature's discouragement has not been told. It is not merely that she seems regardless of the individual life, and bent only upon the preservation of the species. As a matter of fact the species is no more to her than the individual, and the human species no more than any other. All seem equally doomed to disappear. In which case what becomes of the prayers, the faiths, the martyrdoms of the ages? The irony of it all would be too horrible. And yet there it would seem we must leave it. I doubt not there is a solution, but it lies hidden behind the impenetrable veil.

1 'The hideous "No" of Nature.' F. W. Robertson. Geology adds its results to those of Biology.

all shall go; like 'the world-famous *Ça ira*' of the French Revolution (Carlyle's *F. R.* vol. ii. bk. i. 6).

5 Shall be preserved only as fossils, if not scattered to the winds.

It must be remembered that Tennyson, at the time he was writing, stood at a parting of the ways in regard to the evidential treatment of Nature. Those who had preceded him had been content to escape from the difficulties presented by the doctrines of the Faith by shewing that similar difficulties were to be met with in the order and constitution of Nature, which order and constitution all were prepared to acknowledge to be the work of an intelligent and beneficent Being. It was not until the facts of Astronomy, Geology, and Biology began to be collected and arrayed that it became clear to the popular understanding that this primary assumption would have to be justified.

Our poet was one of the first to grasp the full significance of the change. He saw that what he had to face was the vision, not of a Nature full of peaceful beauty and kindly contrivance

intended for the comfort and advantage of man; but rather of a Nature prodigal in its recklessness, callous in its disregard of suffering, and cynically indifferent to moral ideals. The problem was, How is it possible that in a world so constituted there can be any room left for faith in God, or hope for the future of man?

Tennyson takes the facts as they appear. He developes the logical argument with relentless precision, and exhibits its conclusion in the form in which it seems to be most disastrous. And then it is that we begin to see from what directions help, as he hopes for it, must come.

Intellect itself is found to recoil from a result which reduces existence to an intolerable futility. And the heart has its *non possumus* also. At the least the question must be left open. It cannot be settled without a complete knowledge of all the facts; and there are facts of the internal consciousness which are as real as any of the external order.

Later on we shall meet with a yet more confident statement of the relative value of these two classes of facts. For the present the poet can venture no farther. He has struggled with a vehemence which has left him exhausted. It is enough that he has escaped from despair.

LVII

And here it were best to end my singing. It can serve no good purpose for him, or for me, or for any one else. There is no fear that I should ever forget him. Go where I may, that passing bell will never cease to sound in my ears.

1 *the song of woe...an earthly song.* Melpomene had already acknowledged that she is 'but an earthly Muse' (xxxvii. 4). It has now been proved that she can indeed do nothing to draw aside 'the veil.'

sing so wildly. These are the 'wild and wandering cries' to which reference was made in the Prologue.

let us go. The words are addressed to the friends who have listened sympathetically thus far: the 'brethren' referred to at the close of the next canto. See also lxvi. 1.

2 *richly shrined:* possibly in the 'Remains,' a very remarkable volume printed for friends by the elder Hallam in 1834, but not published until 1853. The last line of this quatrain seems to forbid the supposition that the poet has in mind anything written by himself.

3 Compare and contrast the following from Shakespeare's 71st Sonnet:

> No longer mourn for me when I am dead,
> Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell,
> Give warning to the world that I am fled.

4 Writing in 1880 with reference to the death of another, Tennyson said, 'Nor can any modern elegy, so long as men retain the least hope in the after-life of those whom they loved, equal in pathos the desolation of that everlasting farewell, "Atque in perpetuum frater ave atque vale"' (*Mem.* ii. 239). This is the concluding line of a poem by Catullus (*Carm.* ci. 10) after a visit to his brother's grave.

LVIII

In such despairing fashion I was reluctantly making an end of my unprofitable task when, strange to tell, Urania intervened and bade me continue, promising a more satisfactory conclusion.

3 We gather that the poet resumes his efforts to pierce through the mystery which surrounds him, with the deliberate hope that his doing so may be of service to others. Once more he must set himself to win something of that 'far-off interest of tears' of which he had sung in the opening canto.

LIX

Can it be then that Sorrow may after all be other than 'a Priestess in the vaults of Death'? May I indeed venture to 'embrace her as my natural good'? Since the high Muse sanctions the union, it shall be. I will revolt no more. She shall be my bosom companion, and I will seek to learn, if she will let me, the kindlier and more hopeful things which she has to teach; and so set them forth that the world will scarcely suspect the source from which they have come to me.

2 *rule my blood;* instead of being crushed 'like a vice of blood' (iii. 4).

3 *the creature of my love;* inasmuch as my sorrow owed its existence to my love.

This canto first appeared in the 4th edition, of 1851. The poet evidently saw that the transition without some such link was too abrupt. He may also have felt that the 'nobler tone' of lx. 1, followed awkwardly upon the 'nobler leave' of lviii. 3.

It is clear that he meant the new canto to serve as a counterpart to iii.

LX

Trying to reconcile myself to my distress, I am led to reflect that after all my case is but that of the village maiden who has let her affections go out to one who is too far above her in station.

It should be noted that no hint is dropped of any doubt as to whether his friend still exists. So much of Hope he has brought out of the previous struggle, followed as it was by the encouragement of the Heavenly Muse.

LXI

Of one thing I am certain, that, whoever make his company now among the mighty dead, no soul of them all loves him more than I do.

1 *state sublime.* The expression is borrowed from Gray's *Ode for Music.* As will be seen from the following fine lines of that poem, the resemblance goes far beyond the use of a particular phrase.

> From yonder realms of empyrean day
> . . . . . .
> There sit the sainted sage, the bard divine,
> The Few, whom Genius gave to shine
> Thro' every unborn age, and undiscover'd clime.
> Rapt in celestial transport they:
> Yet hither oft a glance from high
> They send of tender sympathy
> To bless the place, where on their opening soul
> First the genuine ardour stole.
> 'Twas Milton struck the deep-ton'd shell,
> And, as the choral warblings round him swell,
> Meek Newton's self bends from his state sublime,
> And nods his hoary head, and listens to the rhyme.

2 *How dwarf'd a growth:* the poor pale shoot on earth shut out from the warmth of the sunshine.

3 *doubtful shore;* as being but dimly descried from so great a height.

The soul of Shakspeare. The reference is to the feeling displayed in the *Sonnets.* It would seem that Hallam was inclined to undervalue these. Tennyson, on the contrary, was prepared to go to great lengths in his admiration of them: see *Mem.* i. 152, ii. 289.

LXII

Though, rather than that the remembrance of me should disconcert him, I would have my love forgotten, or remembered only with a smile.

1 *blench;* shrink back. Originally the word meant, to 'make to blink.'

Compare, 'if he do blench, I know my course.'
(*Hamlet*, ii. 2.)

2 *declined...on;* compare *Hamlet*, i. 5,

to decline
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!

LXIII

Yet, since it does not lower me to think kindly of the creatures beneath me; so perhaps he in all his greatness may look upon me now.

1 *assumptions:* the word is skilfully chosen to convey an idea the opposite to that implied in the 'condescensions' which are described in the first two lines of the stanza.

3 *round;* encircle, embrace.

LXIV

There have been exceptionally gifted men who on the highest pinnacle of fortune have still retained a lingering tenderness for the old days and have not entirely forgotten the early friendships. May it not be so with him?

The poet realising to the full in his low estate how great is the interval between them, yet ventures to hope that at the least he may sometimes come to his friend's mind, if only as part of the old familiar landscape of earth which in vacant and in pensive moods he may find it a pleasure to recall.

3 *golden keys:* for these words used in a bad sense compare the line in *Locksley Hall*,

'Every door is barr'd with gold and opens but to golden keys.'

Here however it is probable that the 'keys' are to be understood no otherwise than as symbols of public office.

LXV

Is it not possible moreover that the influence of our friendship, which abides with so much force in me, may in some measure remain as a power in him? That were indeed a happy thought!

2 *There flutters up;* as a butterfly freed from the chrysalis.

LXVI

One effect of my inward desolation may seem strange and inconsistent. So far from embittering me, it has left me strangely ready for the smaller cheerfulnesses of life. Deprived as I am of all that gives to existence its brightness for others, the minor interests which remain mean more to me than to them.

This phase in the process of recovery is as true psychologically as it must have been difficult to express in words. The illustration employed is singularly vivid and pathetic. Note amongst other details the life-like touches: 'He plays with threads, he beats his chair for pastime.'

LXVII

It is at night that my thoughts turn most inevitably to the one great theme. As I lie in my bed, my mind wanders to that other resting-place. By the degree of the light here I can tell how much of his tablet is decipherable yonder.

1 *the moonlight falls.* One of the 'Poems by Two Brothers' (1827), is entitled 'On the Moonlight shining upon a friend's grave.'

thy place of rest; St Andrew's Church at Clevedon.

broad water. The Severn at this point is nine miles across.

2 *bright in dark.* The expression occurs in Shakespeare's *Sonnet*, xliii.

4 *in the dark church.* In the original edition Tennyson wrote 'in the chancel,' but he altered this when told that the tablet was not in the chancel but, opposite to the vault, on the west wall of the south transept.

The following is the inscription, written by his father, upon the tablet:

To the Memory of

ARTHUR HENRY HALLAM

of Trinity College Cambridge, B.A.

eldest son of HENRY HALLAM, Esquire,

and of JULIA MARIA his Wife,

Daughter of Sir ABRAHAM ELTON Bar^{t}.

of Clevedon Court.

Who was snatched away by sudden death

at Vienna on September 15th 1833,

in the 23rd year of his age.

And now in this obscure and solitary Church

repose the mortal remains of

one too early lost for public fame,

but already conspicuous among his contemporaries

for the brightness of his genius,

the depth of his understanding,

the nobleness of his disposition,

the fervour of his piety,

and the purity of his life.

VALE DULCISSIME

VALE DILECTISSIME DESIDERATISSIME

REQUIESCAS IN PACE

PATER AC MATER HIC POSTHAC REQUIESCAMUS TECUM

USQUE AD TUBAM

LXVIII

Yet when I dream of him, it is always as he was in life, except that it seems as if it were he that was in some trouble rather than I.

1 *Sleep, Death's twin-brother.* In Homer (*Iliad* xiv. 231, xvi. 672, 682) Sleep, as a god, is described as 'twin-brother of Death.' Cf. also Virgil, *Æn.* vi. 278; 'consanguineus Leti Sopor.'

4 *trouble of my youth.* This would seem to imply that this canto was written towards the close of the 17 years which elapsed between Hallam's death and the publication of *In Memoriam.* The subject matter of it is such as would make it possible to insert it here without any disturbance of the course of the thought.

LXIX

One strange dream I had; but it helped me to believe that, when earth is most cold and comfortless, there is a power not of earth which can touch Sorrow's crown of thorns into a garland of gladness.

2 *I took the thorns to bind my brows:* so 'love clasps grief' (see i. 3). He resolves to weave his poet's wreath out of the seemingly unhopeful materials of elegy drawn from the region of sorrow and death.

As Tennyson himself explained: 'I tried to make my grief into a crown of these poems—but this is not to be taken too closely. To write verses about sorrow, grief, and death, is to wear a crown of thorns which ought to be put by, as people say.'

LXX

My efforts to picture the well known face against the darkness do no more than call up a succession of the most grotesque shapes and fancies. Only when I give up the attempt altogether does the vision come of itself sweetly and calmly.

LXXI

By degrees too the dreams become more actual and continuous. There is one in which every detail is recalled. It would be perfect if only it were possible to suppress a vague feeling that there is a mistake somewhere!

1 *kinsman thou to death;* because the body lies as if dead.

and trance; because the spirit may be caught up into the third heaven.

And madness; because of the element of illusion which enters into it all.

we went thro' summer France; during the tour to the Pyrenees in 1830. They left Bordeaux on their homeward journey in the steamer 'Leeds' on the 8th of September.

2 *credit;* influence.

4 The valley of Cauteretz. *The fortress* is probably that of Luz, at the foot of the Baréges road, before coming to St Sauveur. Compare the poem *In the valley of Cauteretz,* which refers to this same visit with Hallam.

LXXII

Twelve months have gone, and the day of his death has come round again. It begins wan and wild and wet; but however it had looked it would have been equally unlovely to me. By all means let it maintain its character for destructiveness, and disappear like a guilty thing amid storm and gloom.

1 *dim dawn, again;* 'the first anniversary of the death' Sept. 15, 1834. (*Mem.* i. 305.)

blow the poplar white; by reversing its leaves.

> The poplars four
> That stand beside my father's door.
>
> *Ode to Memory.*

3 Note the different effects of the rain on the rose and the daisy.

7 Compare Shakespeare's *Sonnet* xxxiii.

> from the forlorn world his visage hide,
> Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.

LXXIII

Not that I have any right to find fault either with nature or death. All things follow their order: and the universe is wide. He may well have been wanted elsewhere. Earthly fame after all is of little account. Everything in the long run will depend upon the judgment of God. And, it may be, the inglorious soul is to be congratulated upon having conserved the energy which might have been expended in making a name.

1 Night with its 'many worlds' scattered through space suggests wider and quieter thoughts.

3 *It rests with God.* Compare Milton's lines:

> Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
> Nor in the glistering foil
> Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
> But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
> And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
> As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
> Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.
>
> *Lycidas*, 78—84.

4 *hollow wraith of dying fame;* the unsubstantial semblance of a reputation which is quickly to pass away. A *wraith* is a phantasm of a person about to die, as a 'ghost' is of one who is dead.

LXXIV

For one thing at least I can be grateful to Death. He has revealed to me, as I might not otherwise have seen it, the kinship of the dead man with the great ones of the past.

1 So Sir Thomas Browne, in his 'Letter to a Friend,' says with reference to some one who has recently died; 'he lost his own face, and looked like one of his near relations: for he maintained not his proper countenance, but looked like his uncle.' (Quoted by Dr Gatty.)

2 *the wise below;* i.e. now living on the earth.

LXXV

To describe him fully is beside my purpose and beyond my power. Nor would the world credit the description, if it could be given. Enough that where he is they fully acknowledge his worth.

1 With this and the following stanzas may be compared Shakespeare's *Sonnet* xvii.

> Who will believe my verse in time to come,
> If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?
> Though yet, heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
> Which hides your life and shows not half your parts.
> If I could write the beauty of your eyes
> And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
> The age to come would say 'This poet lies;
> Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces.'
> So should my papers yellow'd with their age
> Be scorn'd like old men of less truth than tongue,
> And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage
> And stretched metre of an antique song:
> But were some child of yours alive that time,
> You should live twice; in it and in my rhyme.

3 *breeze of song;* an expression from Pindar (*Pythian* iv. 5, οὖρος ὕμνων).

dust of praise; which falls as soon as it is raised.

LXXVI

Judged by the great measures of space and time, how insignificant is human verse! The work of the great poets who impressed the world in its youth may remain, but fleeting indeed will be the existence of modern poetry. If it does not fade with the leaf, it has no life that will compare with the days of the tree.

1 The expression in the last line is taken from *Cymbeline*, i. 4,

till the diminution
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle.

2 *secular abyss;* countless ages. Compare the 'secular to-be' of xli. 6.

3 *the matin songs.* Tennyson explained that he referred to 'the great early poets.'

LXXVII

But whatever be the fate of my verses—and it is easy to think of the uses to which they may be turned—I will not cease my singing. To praise is even more than to be praised.

1 *Foreshorten'd in the tract of time.* The poet is combining metaphors of space and time, as in the previous canto. The 'musing eye,' looking from the standpoint which has been reached by 'the wings of fancy' and 'foresight' (lxxvi. 1, 2), sees the earthly objects below and at a distance. So seen they are no longer striking and impressive, but misshapen and belittled.

2 These lines have been criticised as falling somewhat below the dignity of the poem; but perhaps we ought not to expect to find poets at their best when engaged in depreciating themselves.

The expressions used find a parallel in those placed by Gray in the mouth of Shakespeare:

> Better to bottom tarts and cheesecakes nice,
> Better the roast meat from the fire to save,
> Better be twisted into caps for spice,
> Than thus be patch'd and cobbled in one's grave.

That Tennyson's forecast was not accepted by his contemporaries as likely to be true in his own case may be sufficiently gathered from such words as the following, spoken by Mr Gladstone at Kirkwall, Sept. 13, 1883:

'The Poet Laureate has written his own song on the hearts of his countrymen, that can never die. Time is powerless against him.'

As we conclude the second division of the poem we feel that the severity of Grief has been greatly moderated during its course. The sufferer has learned to look forward. Hope in his case was not indeed to be reached by any royal road. The way to it lay across a region of intellectual doubt and perplexity, and at times seemed well-nigh lost in despair. But in the darkest moments the light in his heart did not fail. Gradually moreover the merely personal and selfish elements are purged out of his expectations, until at length he is able to find real satisfaction in what he foresees will be the future greatness of his friend, and that quite apart from any consideration of what may happen to himself and his own reputation.

THIRD CYCLE

LXXVIII

Another Christmas: and this time calm and still. All signs of mourning have gone. It is not that we feel his absence less. If anything the sorrow has entered more deeply into life as the marks of it have ceased to be apparent on the surface.

1 *Again at Christmas;* 1834.

2 *yule-clog;* a provincial term for the large log which was formerly burnt with much ceremony on the hearth on Christmas Eve.

3 *The mimic picture's breathing grace;* 'tableaux vivants.'

hoodman-blind; blind-man's buff. Compare *Hamlet*, iii. 4:

'That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind.'

LXXIX

The re-assembling of the home circle prompts the explanation of a previous assertion. If his friend filled a place which even a favourite brother could not take, it was because he brought with him a difference and not a similarity of nature and training.

1 *More than my brothers are to me.* The words had been used in ix. 5.

The poet refers to his brother Charles, who was a year older than himself and who had been joint author with him of the *Poems by Two Brothers*. Charles was vicar of Grasby in Lincolnshire. Under the will of an uncle he assumed the name of Turner. He died in 1879. In a letter to Mr Gladstone, Tennyson wrote of him, 'he was almost the most loveable human being I have ever met' (*Mem.* ii. 239).

hold...in fee; that is 'have as a possession.' Compare Wordsworth's use of the expression in the sonnet on the Venetian Republic:

'Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee.'

Lands held 'in fee' were held on the condition of homage, fealty, and military service. It was the fullest possession a man could acquire in feudal times. 'Fee simple' at the present time implies that the property is at the absolute disposal of its owner, as opposed to leasehold or copyhold tenure.

5 *his unlikeness fitted mine.* 'Every power in Nature and Spirit must evolve an opposite as the sole means and condition of manifestation: all opposition is a tendency to reunion.' Coleridge (*Friend*, xiii).

LXXX

It helps me to think of what would have been his deep but calm sorrow had I, and not he, been taken first.

3 *turns his burthen into gain;* the very thing of which the poet at the beginning (i. 2) had doubted the possibility.

4 *His credit thus shall set me free;* the high reputation which he bears will absolve me from any loss of character: if he could so deal with sorrow, I may surely deal with it likewise and escape from blame.

LXXXI

There is rest too in the thought that my love for him may really have lost nothing by his sudden removal which it could have gained from longer knowledge. The frost of death may in a moment have brought the fruit to its perfected maturity.

1 The interpretation of this stanza would be rendered more easy if we might replace the full stop at the end of this verse by a note of interrogation.

LXXXII

If I still feel resentment against Death it is not for his disfigurement of the form in which during one stage of existence the spirit dwelt, nor because he has made this world the poorer by the removal of so much that was precious; but because he has set us beyond the reach of each other's voices.

2 *shatter'd stalks;* as of straw after threshing.

4 In the moment of his most utter perplexity his cry had been, 'O for thy voice to soothe and bless!' (lvi. 7).

LXXXIII

However, things are not with me as they were, inasmuch as the thought of the spring-time is now welcome. The sunshine which brings their glories to the garden and the field, may liberate the music which is at present held fast-bound in my soul.

1 *Dip down upon the northern shore:* the north being the last to be included in the widening circle of lengthening daylight as it reaches further and further down from the Equator.

new-year delaying long. The fact that the 'new-year' is described as 'delaying,' shews that it is not to New Year in the strictly chronological sense that the poet refers: but rather to the annually renewed outburst of life which comes with the return of the brightness and warmth of spring.

2 How far recovery has advanced will be seen by comparing this verse with xxxviii. 2.

3 With the last line compare Cowper's

Laburnum rich
In streaming gold. (*Task*, vi. 149.)

4 It is still 'sorrow' which longs for a fuller and more adequate expression.

LXXXIV

Sometimes indeed I picture what it might have been like had he lived to be my brother by marriage, and my host; as genial in the home as he was famous in the world. I even imagine how, after lives which were lovely and pleasant, we might have passed through death still undivided. But the vanity of such fancies only shews me how easily the little store of content which I have gathered might fail again.

1 *contemplate.* Tennyson evidently was on the side of those who place the accent on the second syllable: see also cxviii. 1.

3 Arthur Hallam had been engaged to Emilia Tennyson. She was subsequently married to Captain Jesse, R.N., and died in 1889.

11 *Arrive at last the blessed goal.* For this use of the verb compare Shakespeare (*Jul. Cæs.* i. 2), 'ere we could arrive the point proposed': and Milton (*Par. Lost*, ii. 409), 'ere he arrive the happy Isle.'

LXXXV

As I was going back in thought to the first word of real comfort which Grief had spoken, I was interrupted by a message which begged me to declare my present condition of mind, and specially to say whether there was left to me faith in Providence or the capacity of further love for man. In answer I can say that I have no doubt that what has happened was God's doing, or that he who died has but entered upon a fuller life. I feel too that my own more worthless existence cannot be passed in idleness; and indeed the active effect of my friend's influence of itself suffices to brace me to effort. Further, the very constitution of my nature has made it easier to bear my sorrow. While therefore that first friendship must ever remain for me sacred and supreme, it by no means follows that I am indifferent to the affection of others, or incapable of returning it. Moreover the spirit of the departed seems to urge me to solace the years of separation that have to be endured with the sympathy of human intercourse. Such a friendship not less genuine, if of a paler hue, I gladly offer to my questioner.

1 See the conclusion of xxvii.

2 Addressed to Edmund Law Lushington (the Senior Classic, Fellow of Trinity and Professor of Greek at Glasgow), who in 1842 married the poet's youngest sister Cecilia. The Epilogue to *In Memoriam* is also addressed to him. There too he is described as 'true and tried.'

6 *The great Intelligences.* The expression has been supposed to be taken from Dante (*Convito*, ii. 5): 'The movers of that third (heaven) are substances separated from matter, that is Intelligences (*Intelligenze*), which the common people call angels.'

12 *A life that all the Muses deck'd.* One of Hallam's earliest and most intimate friends wrote, 'We have invariably agreed that it was of him above all his contemporaries that great and lofty expectations were to be formed' (Pref. to *Remains*, p. xxxiii).

The late Bp Thirlwall, when at Cambridge with him, had remarked, 'He is the only man here of my own standing before whom I bow in conscious inferiority in everything' (*Mem.* i. p. 107).

14 *the imaginative woe...broke the blow.* The imagination which the poet has brought to bear upon his sorrow—as shewn in the deep interest which he has taken in the many mysterious problems which the fact of it has opened to his mind—while it has rendered the effect of his loss more wide reaching in its bearings upon his whole life, has also served to distribute the force of the blow and thus to make it more endurable at any particular moment.

16 *master'd Time;* in defiance of 'the victor Hours' (cf. i. 4).

23 *conclusive bliss...serene result;* when at last is attained the

> one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.
>
> (Epilogue, *ad fin.*)

27 *hold apart;* as out of the reach of comparison or rivalry.

LXXXVI

I can open my being also to the reviving influences of Nature—as on a certain well remembered evening, balmy and glorious after the rain, when the breeze seemed as if it might breathe new life, and waft me across the seas away from the land of doubt and death to some far off sphere of more than earthly Peace.

1 *ambrosial.* 'Ambrosia' was the food of the immortals. The adjective here has the sense of 'divinely reviving.'

breathing bare the round of space; sweeping every cloud from the horizon.

2 *horned;* an epithet used by Virgil of the Tiber. Rivers were represented by both Greeks and Romans in a bull's form, because their bifurcating streams were supposed to resemble horns. (Cf. *Æn.* viii. 77.)

3 *the fancy;* compare, 'Take wings of fancy,' lxxvi. 1.

4 The reference is, as the poet explained, to 'the west wind rolling to the Eastern seas till it meets the evening star.'

Tennyson notes in his own hand that this poem was written at Barmouth. (*Mem.* i. 313.)

LXXXVII

And there are other scenes which bring to the mind visions upon which it is not wholly sad to dwell. As I wander about the colleges at Cambridge, in spite of all changes, there come vividly back the recollections of the glad keen life of undergraduate days; and of Hallam as the one to whom all turned as to a master, hanging on his utterances with a reverence that had in it something that was akin to worship.

1 *the reverend walls;* of Trinity College.

the halls; the college dining halls.

2 *high-built organs;* so described because raised upon the screen which separates the chapel from the ante-chapel.

prophet blazon'd on the panes; as at King's.

4 *that long walk of limes;* the Trinity avenue.

the rooms in which he dwelt; off the central staircase on the south side of the New Court, now numbered 3, G.

6 *a band of youthful friends.* The reference is no doubt to the meetings of the 'Cambridge Conversazione Society,' nicknamed 'The Apostles,' because its membership was limited to 12. The club had existed for about five years when Tennyson joined it, having been originally founded by Sterling and Maurice. Tennyson notes that it was called the 'Water Club' because there was no wine. He adds, 'They used to make speeches—I never did.'

Lord Houghton, speaking in 1866 at the opening of the new Cambridge Union, said: 'I am inclined to believe that the members of that generation were, for the wealth of their promise, a rare body of men such as this University has seldom contained.' Amongst them, besides Lord Houghton himself (then known as Monckton Milnes), were Spedding, Trench, Alford, Thompson (afterwards Master of Trinity), Spring-Rice, and Merivale.

8 *rapt;* carried along without a pause.

9 *The God within him light his face.* One who knew him, speaking of his appearance, wrote: 'Some time or other, at some rare moments of the divine Spirit's supremacy in our souls, we all put on the heavenly face that will be ours hereafter, and for a brief lightning space our friends behold us as we shall look when this mortal has put on immortality. On Arthur Hallam's brow and eyes this heavenly light, so fugitive on other human faces, rested habitually.' (Frances A. Kemble, *Record of a Girlhood*, ii. p. 3.)

10 *azure orbits;* sky-blue eyes.

The bar of Michael Angelo. 'These lines I wrote from what Arthur Hallam said after reading of the prominent ridge of bone over the eyes of Michael Angelo: "Alfred, look over my eyes; surely I have the bar of Michael Angelo."' (*Mem.* i. p. 38 *note.*)

LXXXVIII

Whence comes it that in the song of the poet, as in that of the nightingale, most inconsistent strains are mingled? When he sets out to make his music a dirge there flash forth —beyond his will—the tones of triumph.

1 *Wild bird.* By his use of the direct address Tennyson avoids the necessity of having openly to discard the almost universal poetic tradition which makes the singing nightingale feminine. As a matter of fact the female bird has no song.

liquid sweet; perhaps a reminiscence of Petrarch's *Sonnet* cclxx, which begins

'This nightingale who maketh moan so sweet.'

Eden; see xxiv. 2 and *Epilogue* 7. In using the word here it is possible that the poet had in mind the fact that the Greek word for delight (ἡδονή) is similar in sound.

quicks; quick-set hedges.

2 *darkening leaf;* twilight foliage. Originally it stood 'dusking leaf.'

3 *The glory of the sum of things;* compare the previous words of lxxxv. 23, 'I triumph in conclusive bliss.'

Compare the whole of this poem with Wordsworth's, which begins

> O Nightingale! thou surely art
> A Creature of a fiery heart;—
> These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce;
> Tumultuous harmony and fierce!

Wordsworth goes on to describe the song of the 'Stock-dove' and characteristically prefers it, saying

> That was the Song—the Song for me!

LXXXIX

Again memory calmly recalls the past. The garden at Somersby, with the friend full of rejoicing at his escape from the town; the reading aloud on the lawn, the picnic in the woods, the talks by the stream, the homeward stroll through the meadows—it all comes back, how happy and how fragrant!

1 *counterchange;* diversify: possibly with a reference to the use of the word in heraldry. 'This lawn was overshadowed on one side by wych-elms, and on the other by larch and sycamore trees.' (*Mem.* i. p. 2.)

2 *down;* from the Temple.

The dust and din and steam of town; compare Horace's 'Fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ.' (*Odes*, iii. 29, 12.)

4 *in this retreat.* The village of Somersby is about midway between the market towns of Spilsby and Horncastle in Lincolnshire. Its population in 1835 was sixty-one. What was then the rectory is a roomy house with its back to the road, and its front open to a very extensive stretch of undulating country lying below it. The air has a bracing tone, and the scenery is well adapted for fine cloud and sunset effects.

ambrosial. Note the use of this epithet again and compare lxxxvi. 1.

6 *The Tuscan poets;* Dante and Petrarch, possibly also Ariosto and Tasso. Tuscan is here used as synonymous with Italian. For Hallam's carefully considered estimate of the comparative worth of these poets, see the *Remains*, pp. 99, 130—133, and the admirable essay on 'Petrarch,' p. 306. Hallam spoke Italian 'with perfect fluency.' Six of his Italian sonnets are printed in the *Remains*.

12 *the crimson-circled star;* the planet Venus.

her father's grave; the sea into which the sun appears to sink. Tennyson himself explained that in speaking of the sun as the father of Venus he had in his mind the theory of Laplace, according to which the planets were evolved from the sun.

13 *woodbine veil;* of honeysuckle.

buzzings; made by the bees.

the honied hours; compare Gray's *Ode on the Spring*:

> The busy murmur glows!
> The insect youth are on the wing,
> Eager to taste the honied spring,
> And float amid the liquid noon.

In our poem the time is evening, when the bees are bringing back the honey of the day.

XC

The cynic may picture the dismay that might result in our homes from the re-appearance of the dead of whom we speak so fondly: but *his* coming—if only he would come—could bring me nothing but delight.

2 We have the same thought in *The Lotos Eaters*:

> Surely now our household hearths are cold:
> Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
> And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.

Nor may we forget the remarkable study of this theme in *Enoch Arden*.

XCI

Let him come, young and full of promise as I knew him, with the first freshness of the spring-time; or let him come, more glorious, as he is now, with all the ripeness of summer. Only let him not come as a ghost in the darkness, but as a splendour in the light.

1 *the sea-blue bird of March.* A good deal of discussion as to Tennyson's meaning has now been set at rest by the publication of a letter which he once wrote to the late Duke of Argyll in which he says that, as he was walking one day in March by a deep-banked brook, he saw under the leafless bushes the kingfisher flitting or fleeting beneath him, and there came into his head a fragment of an old Greek lyric poet, 'ἁλιπόρφυρος ἔαρος ὄρνις*,' 'the sea-purple, or sea-shining, bird of spring'; spoken of as the halcyon. (*Mem.* ii. p. 4.)

4 *the sunbeam broodeth;* cf. 'a brooding star' (xlvi. 4).

XCII

But indeed no apparition of any sort could be satisfactory; nor could any evidence which it might offer be convincing: not even though it foretold a thing which should actually happen. All would seem to be subjective; an illusion, a reminiscence, or a presentiment of my own.

4 As the sun, by refraction, may appear in full size above the horizon when it is in reality below it.

* *Fragments of Alcman*, 26.

XCIII

No, he will never come to me thus. But might I not hope that spirit could draw nigh and hold intercourse, not with sense, but with spirit?

1 *clasp't in clay.* Here the thought is of birth and not burial. So the Greek proverb played on σῶμα σῆμα, 'the body a tomb.'

3 *sightless;* i.e. invisible: as in cxv. 2.

tenfold-complicated change. The thought of Dante's Ten Heavens seems to have been in Tennyson's mind: see *Paradiso*, xxviii. 15 and foll.

4 *this blindness of the frame;* due to the failure on the part of the senses to perceive the realities of the spirit-world: compare the line in stanza 2, 'Where all the nerve of sense is numb.'

XCIV

Such mystic communion however is only possible where a holy peace possesses the soul. Spirits whose rest is won can hold no fellowship with uneasy consciences and discordant hearts.

XCV

Once indeed some such experience was mine. It was a perfect evening in summer; so calm that the lights burned steadily in the open air. We lingered on in the dusk. It grew late. One after another went within. The house was dark and the night was still. Yearning for a word from him, I took out some of his letters. They spoke of his love which he was certain nothing could change, and of his faith

which feared not to grapple with doubts such as few would face. As I mused, it seemed as if not merely the memory but the very self of the departed had returned to me; or rather it was as if I had been lifted out of myself and caught up into the presence of the essential reality and ultimate harmony of things. How long it lasted, or what it meant, I could not say. It came to an end in a moment of returning self-consciousness and critical misgiving. The dim outlines of the trees and the cattle re-appeared in their places. The breeze began to waken the flowers. Then silently and significantly the light of the gloaming became one with the light of the dawn.

1 *on the lawn;* at Somersby.

2 *chirr'd.* To 'chirr' is to 'make a continuous tremulous sound.' The word is an old one, doubtless of imitative origin. Cf. the Dutch *kirren*, 'to coo.'

the fluttering urn; with its lid lifted by the rising steam.

3 *filmy shapes;* of moths attracted to the light of the candles.

9 *The living soul.* Commenting upon this, Tennyson once said, '*The* living soul—perchance of the Deity. The first reading was "*His* living soul was flash'd on mine" –but my conscience was troubled by "his." I've often had a strange feeling of being wound and wrapped in the Great Soul.'

10 *mine in this;* originally, 'mine in his.' The change of the text in this and the preceding stanza is to be carefully noted. The poem has been leading up to a climax of personal communion—'Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost' (see xciii. 2)—with the dead man: and as such the poet was at first tempted to describe it (compare cxxii. 1). But closer analysis made him dissatisfied with the description. We shall find that henceforward the thought of his friend is

so blended with the sense of the Universal Presence as often to make it hard to say whether the primary reference is to the one or the other.

empyreal; celestial: literally, 'pertaining to the empyrean,' which was supposed to surround the outmost sphere of the fixed stars. See note on cxxii. 2.

that which is; the ultimate reality (τὸ ὄντως ὄν).

11 From that high standpoint the life of the world appeared to be a perfect harmony, in which even Chance and Death had their appointed place.

12 *matter-moulded forms of speech;* words designed to express our experiences in this lower world, and accordingly cast in the moulds of matter.

13 The repetition of the description in stanza 4 well conveys the effect produced by the return to consciousness and to a sense of the familiar surroundings.

14 *the sycamore;* as previously mentioned, in lxxxix. 1.

This picture of daybreak has been declared to be unmatched for beauty in the whole range of poetry.

The following remarkable description written by Tennyson will be read with interest in view of the experience recorded in this canto: 'A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me thro' repeating my own name two or three times to myself silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being; and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life.' (*Mem.* i. p. 320.)

XCVI

Doubt may be an evil; but I know too, by his example, that it may be a stage in the attainment of a stronger faith. It has not always been those who were furthest from the darkness who were nearest to the true conception of the Divine.

1 This canto takes up the acknowledgment made in the last (xcv. 11), that 'doubt' had come to disturb his realisation of the spiritual world.

you, whose light-blue eyes; perhaps Miss Emily Sellwood, with whom the poet fell in love at his brother's wedding in May 1836. It is at least interesting to note that Carlyle, writing to his wife in Sept. 1850, after the poet's marriage, says, 'Mrs Tennyson lights up bright glittering blue eyes when you speak to her.'

2 An intimate friend of Hallam writing after his death said, 'Perhaps I ought to mention that when I first knew him he was subject to occasional fits of mental depression, which gradually grew fewer and fainter, and had at length, I thought, disappeared or merged in a peaceful Christian faith.' (Preface to *Remains*, p. xxxi.)

Hallam himself wrote,

> barren doubt like a late-coming snow
> Made an unkind December of my spring,
> . . . . . .
> ...my mind hath passed from wintry gloom.
> (*Remains*, p. 75.)

3 Compare Carlyle's words: 'A strange contradiction lay in me, and I as yet knew not the solution of it: knew not that spiritual music can spring only from discords set in harmony.' (*Sartor Resartus*, p. 178.)

6 *in the darkness and the cloud;* where Moses was with God. 'God is not only a God who reveals, but who "hides himself"; and worshippers are apt to make

up for the defects in revelation by imaginations as little compatible with the glory of God as the golden calf was.' (H. C. Beeching, 'In Memoriam,' *in loc.*)

Compare with the thought of this canto, and especially of its last lines, the following from Mr Ruskin : 'We surely need not wonder that mist and all its phenomena have been made delightful to us, since our happiness as thinking beings must depend upon our being content to accept only partial knowledge even in those matters which chiefly concern us. If we insist upon perfect intelligibility and complete declaration in every moral subject, we shall instantly fall into the misery of unbelief. Our whole happiness and power of energetic action depend upon our being able to breathe and live in the cloud : content to see it opening here and closing there : rejoicing to catch through the thinnest films of it glimpses of stable and substantial things : but yet perceiving a nobleness even in the concealment, and rejoicing that the kindly veil is spread where the untempered light might have scorched us, or the infinite clearness wearied. And I believe that the resentment of this interference of the mist is one of the forms of proud error which are too easily mistaken for virtues.' (*Frondes Agrestes*, p. 44.)

XCVII

The truth is that the mind's mystery may be the heart's opportunity. Love looking for love can discover its image anywhere. The fact too that its object is greater than it has power to comprehend serves but to increase the admiration and the trustfulness of true devotion.

1 *has talk'd with rocks and trees;* and found them responsive. They speak of Hallam : cf. cxxx. 1.

His own vast shadow; like the spectre of the Brocken.

5 *he sits apart;* occupied but not really estranged.

6 *thrids;* a variant of 'threads.'

XCVIII

There is one place which I cannot bring myself to visit. Vienna for me remains the very home of ill fortune, and that in spite of his having asserted that no statelier city, no more contented and light-hearted people, could anywhere be found.

1 *You leave us;* his brother Charles and his bride who started for their honeymoon on the Rhine at the end of May 1836.

2 'To *that* city my father would never go, and he gave me a most emphatic "no" when I once proposed a tour there with him.' (Hallam Tennyson, *Mem.* i. p. 149.)

the wisp that gleams on Lethe; the *ignis fatuus*, or 'will o' the wisp,' on the river of forgetfulness.

5 *gnarr;* snarl, growl. A word used by Spenser.

6 *mother town;* i.e. 'metropolis.'

XCIX

The recurrence of the fatal day finds me calmer than it did on a previous occasion. The storm is no longer raging without; but the sky is red, and amid much that is beautiful there is the autumn feeling of decay. To multitudes no doubt the anniversary will have its associations of gladness; but how many more will be one with me in connecting it with the memories of death.

1 *Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again;* see the same line at the beginning of lxxii. The reference there was to the first anniversary in 1834; here, if we are to be guided by the allusion in the preceding canto, it must be the third anniversary which is referred to (Sept. 15, 1836).

5 *the slumber of the poles;* the movement of the axis of the earth being like that of a top 'asleep.'

C

But the time has now arrived when we must quit for ever our much loved home. As I gaze down upon the familiar landscape, there is no feature but is intimately associated with some memory of him with whom I entered so heartily into the enjoyment of it all. To part from it is like losing him afresh.

1 *I climb the hill;* in the original edition, 'I wake, I rise.'

Dr George Clayton Tennyson, the poet's father, Rector of Somersby, died in 1831. The house in which he had lived was not, strictly speaking, the rectory, but the manor house belonging to the Burtons who owned the property and were patrons of the living. By an arrangement with the new incumbent it was agreed that the Tennysons should remain where they were. This they did until 1837, when for family reasons they decided that it was best to leave the country and take a house nearer to London.

CI

More especially sad is it to leave the garden and its surroundings. Trees, flowers, and brook—a fresh pang comes with the sight of each. How long it must be before others can feel towards them as we have felt: and by that time we shall be well-nigh forgotten.

3 *The brook.* 'The charm and beauty of this brook haunted him through life.' (Hallam Tennyson, *Mem.* i. 3.) It rises a little above Somersby, runs just below the rectory garden, flowing in an easterly direction, 'a rivulet, then a river' with deep banks and innumerable turnings. After a course of some length, it enters the sea at a spot called Gibraltar Point, where it forms the Wainfleet haven.

the lesser wain; the constellation 'Ursa Minor.'

4 *hern and crake;* heron and corn-crake.

6 *glebe.* The word is probably used here in its more general sense of 'soil' or 'land,' in accordance with its original derivation from the Latin *gleba*, 'a clod.' So in Gray's *Elegy* (st. 7) we have,

> Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
> Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke.

'In 1892,' writes Hallam Tennyson, 'I visited the old home, and when I returned, told my father that the trees had grown up obscuring the view from the Rectory, and that the house itself looked very desolate. All he answered was, "Poor little place!"' (*Mem.* i. 2.)

CII

It is poor work trying to decide which reason for distress at leaving has the greater claim to be heard. At one moment it is the recollection of boyhood with its first stirrings of poetic feeling; at another it is the later and most sacred memory of the hours spent with a dearest friend, which seems to appeal most strongly. Ultimately both melt into a single regret.

2 Possibly we have an echo here of the opening lines of Shakespeare's *Sonnet* cxliv.

> Two loves I have of comfort and despair
> Which like two spirits do suggest me still.

3 *its matin song.* The 'Poems by Two Brothers' were published in 1827, before Alfred Tennyson was 18.

4 *trebly dear.* This claimant is not content to say 'doubly,' which might imply that the two claims were of equal magnitude!

6 *leave the pleasant fields;* the 'dulcia linquimus arva' of Virgil, *Ecl.* i.

CIII

Sleeping thoughts may sometimes be wiser than waking ones. On the last night I had a dream. It was as if I had been summoned to leave a fair abode (in which pure, calm enjoyment in the present drew its highest inspiration from that which was most worthy in the past) in order to embark upon a future utterly unknown. It was grief to obey, but with obedience came enlarging capacities of power and of vision. And lo! the past itself had gone before: only it had grown better and vaster. Arthur was there, greater than ever, to welcome me and all that I brought with me: and together we set sail for the Isles of the Blessed. Thoughts like these made the home-leaving easier: and I could go content.

1 *of the dead;* i.e. of the dead man.

2 *maidens with me;* three in number, as would appear from the references in stanzas 3, 7, and 9. They stand in the allegory for all those human powers that make life truly and nobly beautiful.

Compare the poet's words elsewhere;

Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters
That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without tears.
(*To ——. With the following poem.*)

hidden summits; 'the high—the divine—the origin of life' (Tennyson).

A river; Time: as later 'the Sea' is Eternity.

'Time is a river, the mighty current of created things.'
(M. Aurelius, *Thoughts*, iv. 43.)

7 'The great progress of the age, as well as the opening of another world' (Tennyson).

12 *wrong*. 'He was wrong to drop his earthly hopes and powers—they will still be of use to him' (Tennyson's note).

With the latter part of this canto should be compared the following from *Ulysses*, the poem of which Tennyson said that it 'was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and gave my feeling about the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*' (*Mem.* i. 196):

> my purpose holds
> To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
> Of all the western stars, until I die.
> It may be that the gulfs shall wash us down:
> It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
> And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

We have now reached the conclusion of the Third Cycle of the poem. It opened 'calmly.' It was marked by the beginning of gentler thoughts of Death; and by a growing sense of the reality and nearness of the spiritual world. Recollections of past happiness could be recalled without the former pain; while new and strange consolations offered themselves in the present. Misgivings and regrets there were from time to time; but these, though always treated with the utmost consideration, were unable to hold their own, and at last disappeared altogether from a horizon which had been widened to include the vision of a more than earthly Peace.

FOURTH CYCLE

CIV

Again Christmas has come, and again bells are heard. But they are not the familiar sounds of old; that is the only sadness they awaken.

1 *The time draws near;* Christmas 1837, the fifth since Hallam's death.

A single church; Waltham Abbey.

3 *new unhallow'd ground.* On leaving Somersby the family had settled at Beech Hill House, near High Beech, on the border of Epping Forest, where they remained until 1840.

CV

It is some gain that change of place justifies the abandonment of the old and somewhat incongruous festivities. Let the petty cares of life be kept in abeyance for a while on a night that should be sacred to the memories of the past: but for the rest let there be a stillness in which the mind may turn unhindered to the glad thought of the great future with its slowly coming good.

3 *broke the bond of dying use;* as indeed had been foretold in xxix. 4.

6 *in the lucid east;* compare xxx. 8.

7 *rising worlds;* the heavenly bodies appearing above the horizon.

Most noticeable is the effect of exile. Painful as was the separation from the old home and its sacred associations, such separation was an indispensable step in the education of the poet. It was needed if he was to be emancipated from the narrowness of what was merely local and personal, and enabled to rise to a permanent conception of a hope which would hold everywhere and for all.

In the following cantos we trace the developement of hope under the new conditions until in its intensity it kindles into Joy. Indeed, as we shall see, we have not long to wait.

CVI

It is the New Year's Eve: and now the bells are welcome. Let them peal out with all their might, and tell of the good time coming. Out with the evil old; and in with the better and happier, because the more really Christian, new.

1 *Ring out, wild bells.* That Tennyson was ready enough himself to help the bells to speak their message will not be doubted by those who remember the incident related in his *Memoir* (i. 93) in connection with the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832. The news had reached Somersby in the middle of the night. But at once with some of his brothers and sisters he 'sallied out into the darkness, and began to ring the church bells madly,' to the no small astonishment, and indeed indignation, of some of the neighbours.

7 *the thousand years of peace;* the 'Millennium.'

8 *the Christ that is to be.* There are three stages to be distinguished in the revelation of Christ. (1) The Christ *that was*, in the days of His flesh when He sojourned as an individual Man on the earth (see the description in canto xxxvi). (2) The Christ *that is*, where now we see Him not, in a glory of greatness which transcends our power of comprehension (as addressed in the *Prologue*). (3) The Christ *that is to be*, when He shall appear hereafter, not alone, but manifested in that perfected Human Society which then only will attain its perfection, when being wholly filled with His Spirit it can perfectly act as His Body. It is for this completest social fulfilment of Christianity that the poet is appealing here.

For the N. T. teaching in regard to this ideal goal of the life of Man, see St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians; and especially chap. iv. 12 f., "the building of the body of the Christ, till we all come...unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ."

CVII

His birthday, wintry as it is, shall be kept with festal cheer.

1 *the day when he was born;* the 27th anniversary of Feb. 1, 1811.

2 Here follows one of those nature-pictures of Tennyson which stand out clear-cut before the imagination. The effect of the cruel 'nor' easter,' adding to the severities of the winter's night, is almost felt. 'Its fierceness, keenness, iron-heartedness, its savage noise, the merciless weather of it, pass from the woods out to the sea, and the moon hangs hard-edged over the passing squalls of snow. The use of rough vowels, of words that hiss and clang, and smite the ear, heightens the impression.' S. A. Brooke.

3 *brakes;* i.e. bushes.

grides; grinds harshly. Compare Wordsworth's use:

Through his brain
At once the griding iron passage found.
(*Guilt and Sorrow*, st. 55.)

4 *the drifts;* of snow.

But fetch...of heat; an echo of Horace, *Odes*, i. 9.

'In the' second 'cycle the suggestiveness of the blooming season must make its way from without into a reluctant mood; in the' third 'cycle the calmer mood and the promising season answer spontaneously to each other; but here in the closing cycle the hopeful mood has so overcome the influences of season and weather that even the bitter wintry day can have no disturbing effect on the confirmed cheer within.' (Genung, *In Memoriam*, 'Its Purpose and Structure,' p. 178.)

CVIII

There is danger in long continued solitude. Apart from sympathy the best efforts of mind and spirit become futile. The imagined revelation of the unseen world may in reality be no more than the projection of self. Practical wisdom—however it fall short of the highest—is to be attained by most of us from the discipline of suffering, interpreted in the light of ordinary human intercourse.

1 Shelley described Byron as 'eating the bitter core of his own heart.'

4 *'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;* compare the Greek saying, *παθήματα μαθήματα.*

Whatever wisdom sleep with thee; i.e. whatever wisdom you took away with you out of my reach. Compare cxiii. 1.

CIX

On his birthday it is natural to think of him. His certainly was no one-sided developement. Mixing freely in the common life he united gifts of heart and of head; combining qualities seemingly the most opposite—enthusiastic vehemence with logical precision, passion with purity, zeal for freedom with a love of order, the strength of manhood with the grace of woman. Shame indeed to me, if I have studied such a pattern for nothing!

2 *seraphic;* cf. xxx. 7.

That Tennyson was not alone in his judgment will be seen from the following estimate.

'If ever man was born for great things he was. Never was a more powerful intellect joined to a purer and holier heart; and the whole illuminated with the richest imagination, with the most sparkling, yet the kindest wit.' Letter from J. M. Kemble, on hearing of Hallam's death. (*Mem.* i. 106.)

CX

The charm of his presence used to work like magic upon young and old. The timid were strengthened, and the ardent were won. Pride and malice restrained themselves: severity and effrontery alike were brought under the spell. As I watched, I was filled with admiration and delight: and now my heart's desire is but to follow his lead, wide as the interval between us must be.

1 *rathe;* early: from A.S. *hræth*, 'quick.' Cf. 'bring the rathe primrose.' *Lycidas*, 142.

4 *thy nearest;* 'thy dearest,' in the earlier editions.

CXI

How vain is the mere assumption of the courtly manner! Native vulgarity in any rank of life will out, however men seek to hide it. In him there was more of nobility than he could exhibit, and never the suspicion of anything illiberal or base. It was the perfection of the natural. He *was* what so many others try to appear—a gentleman.

1 *The churl in spirit.* The A.S. *cheorl* simply meant 'man': thence the word came to signify 'peasant'; and ultimately it was used only in the sense of 'a rude, low-bred fellow.'

3 *act;* i.e. act a part.

5 *villain fancy.* 'Villain' in Old English meant a 'serf attached to the land' (from Lat. *villa*, a farmhouse). Here again, as in the case of churl, the word came ultimately to be employed in a bad sense only.

God and Nature met in light; cf. lxxxvii. 9.

6 Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Christian Morals*, says: 'the true heroick English gentleman hath no peer.'

CXII

It is, I am well aware, no sign of wisdom that I prefer brilliancy of any sort to commonplace worth: but his nature was so amazingly rich—like a very world in itself—that I must be pardoned if all others seem to me somewhat insignificant beside it.

1 'I, who make allowance for the weaknesses of men of genius, hold very cheap the perfection of inferior natures' (H. C. Beeching, *in loc.*).

2 *lesser lords of doom;* ordinary persons who, as possessing free will, are 'masters of their fate,' while yet they have not the gifts of intellect which command greatness.

4 In him could be watched the whole process of the growth of *cosmos* from *chaos*: original materials wrought into shape, firm standing ground secured against the storm; while at the same time room was left for the action of great currents of movement and change, though even these were controlled and made subject to the law of the intellect.

CXIII

If only he had lived, what might he not have been to his country in the times of unrest and upheaval which seem to lie before us!

1 *'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;* repeated from cviii. 4.

4 *licensed;* i.e. 'permitted,' or possibly even 'legalised.'

roll it; by a 'revolution.'

5 *undulations to and fro;* the movement that is not progress.

At the time of Hallam's death his old schoolfellow at Eton, Mr Gladstone, wrote: 'When much time has elapsed, when most bereavements would be forgotten, he will still be remembered, and his place I fear will be felt to be still vacant, singularly as his mind was calculated by its native tendencies to work powerfully and for good, in an age full of import to the nature and destinies of man' (Preface to *Remains*, p. xliv).

CXIV

The world now is all for the spread of knowledge: and I should be the last to demur. But knowledge has an ardent impetuosity which in its present immature condition may be fraught with serious perils. Knowledge by itself, so far from being of necessity heavenly, may even become devilish in its selfish violence. Everything depends upon its being held in due subordination to those higher elements in our nature which go to make wisdom. Would that the ideal aim of our education were to produce such as he was, in whom every increase in intellectual ability was accompanied by the growth of some finer grace of the spirit!

1 *Her pillars;* i.e. her limits. The 'pillars of Hercules' ('Gibraltar') stood for the boundary of the ancient world.

2 *on her forehead sits a fire;* the sign of inspiration (compare Acts ii). It is shewn later that the influence is not necessarily derived from the highest source.

3 *She cannot fight the fear of death.* Nothing she can bring can remove the fear of death: no mere knowledge can do that.

some wild Pallas from the brain. According to Greek legend Hephæstus clave open the head of Zeus with an axe, upon which Pallas Athene sprang forth in full armour.

6 Compare *Locksley Hall*; 'Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers': and Cowper's somewhat prosaic lines,

> Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
> Have ofttimes no connection...
> Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much,
> Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
>
> (*Task*, vi. 88.)

At the time when Tennyson wrote, and for many years after, everything was hoped from the 'Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.' The world needs constantly to be taught afresh that the training of the intellect can be no substitute for the formation of character.

CXV

Again the spring-time has come, bringing all its bright sights and happy sounds. And with it the yearning after my friend also revives again.

1 *burgeons;* i.e. puts forth buds or shoots; from Old French *burjon*, 'a bud.' The word had well-nigh disappeared since Dryden, until its use was restored by Tennyson.

quick; quick-set hedge.

squares; fields.

ashen roots; roots of ash trees.

In this canto there is given to us the last note of time: and most significant it is that we are left with the spring-tide. The original summer of former happiness is now far behind; but the winter of dark and seemingly barren distress is also past. Grief is not dead, but its nature is changed. Already there is in it the promise of an unfading summer that is to come when sorrow shall indeed have been turned into Joy.

CXVI

Even now the yearning is far less than before the mere desire for a restoration of the past. The Easter of Nature awakens instincts which if they could not create, yet confirm a belief in a better resurrection than that. I do not forget the past, but my longing now is for such a union as we have never experienced yet.

1 *Is it;* to be pronounced as one syllable.

crescent prime; growing spring. See note on xliii. 4.

CXVII

May I not believe that the very purpose of delay is to enhance the rapture of that union when it comes?

1 Cf. i. 4. The Hours, which at first were regarded as enemies who would conquer his love if he did not guard it jealously, are now seen to be friends in disguise.

3 Note the various modes of measuring time; the hour-glass, the dial, the clock, and the sun.

the courses of the suns; cf. Shakespeare, *Sonnet* lix, 'five hundred courses of the sun.'

CXVIII

Yet Time is much more than Delay. It is the work of Time to inaugurate a process the results of which will live on when that work is done. The earth has been forming through ages; and most gradual has been the developement of its highest product, Man. And Man, as we know him, is not the end; but the prophecy of a still higher race. Yes, and also of himself exalted; if so be that he exemplify in his own life-history the progress about him: whether by steady growth, or more fiercely and tragically (and more after the manner of the earth's own experiences), through sufferings which leave glorious scars. It is for each of us therefore to co-operate with the upward tendency: to emerge from the animal and leave the brute behind.

1 The teleology of Time.

Time, the giant labouring in his youth. There is probably a reference to the mythical Cronos, interpreted in the later Classical period as equivalent to Chronos, 'Time,' who was the youngest of the Titans and the father of Zeus.

earth and lime. The highest results of man's moral and

intellectual being—'love and truth'—are not to be thought of as mere physical products of the brain. Compare,

> Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
> Was not spoken of the soul. (Longfellow.)

2 *the dead;* cf. xxx. 6, 'They do not die,' &c.

breathers of an ampler day; cf. the 'largior æther' of Virgil (*Æn.* vi. 640).

ever nobler; their progress is continuous.

They say; according to the well-known hypothesis by which Laplace (1749—1827) sketched the progress of the solar system from the state of an original gaseous *nebula* to its existing condition of a central incandescent sun with surrounding cool planetary bodies.

3 *cyclic storms;* storms lasting for whole cycles, or ages.

4 *type;* reproduce, exemplify: so that Man should indeed be a 'Microcosm.'

7 *The reeling Faun.* Fauns in the old mythology were represented as half-human, with pointed ears, tails, short horns, and goats' feet. They were associated with merriment and mischief (cf. Keats' *Endymion*, 'waggish fauns'). Here the grosser side of their character is emphasised.

the sensual feast; an expression from Shakespeare's *Sonnet* cxli.

This is one of the most remarkable cantos of the poem, both on account of the argument in itself, and of the fact that the poet employed it when he did.

In order to appreciate the significance of this latter point we must remember that *The Origin of Species* did not appear until 1859. Nor is it now possible to suppose, as many have supposed, that Tennyson was indebted for his conception of the world's evolution to a book called *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, published in 1844. We have it on the best authority that 'the sections of *In Memoriam* about Evolution had been read by his friends some years before the publication of the *Vestiges*' (*Mem.* i. 223). Mr Romanes indeed did not

hesitate to say that 'in *In Memoriam* Tennyson noted the fact, and a few years later Darwin supplied the explanation' (*Darwin and after Darwin*).

In connection with this canto should be studied lv, lvi, cxx and cxxiv.

CXIX

Once again I visit the house where he lived, and now almost without a pang. Spring influences have penetrated even into the heart of the city. No longer is everything dark and unlovely. There are pleasant scents, and cheerful sounds, and bright visions, and glad recollections of the days gone by.

The two preceding cantos were introduced by way of parenthesis. The thought of the change which has come with the spring-time, both without and within, now appears again.

1 The similarities of expression here and in vii should be carefully noticed: as also the marked contrast of tone.

the meadow in the street; the scent of the grass cut and drying in the Regent's Park.

CXX

I trust that my efforts and conflicts have not been thrown away, as they undoubtedly have been if materialism is after all to be the final account of man. In that case moreover a further conclusion would follow. For myself at all events existence itself would cease to be tolerable. Happily I have innate evidence to the contrary which is enough for me, whatever the *savants* of the future may decide.

1 *Like Paul with beasts.* The reference is to the obscure words in the great Resurrection-chapter (1 Cor. xv); "If, after the manner of men, I fought with beasts at Ephesus."

CXXI

The parable of the heavens is a true one. The planet sinks with the light which dies away from a world whose day is done: but it appears again still higher than before, with the freshness and vigour of the morning. Even so my present joy is but an altered aspect of my former grief.

1 *Hesper* (ἕσπερος, Lat. *vesper*, 'evening'); the Greek name of the planet Venus: 'the evening star.'

o'er the buried sun; cf. lxxxix. 12.

2 Cf. *Comus*, 93: 'The star which bids the shepherds fold.'

3 *Phosphor* (φωσφόρος, Lat. *lucifer*, 'light-bringing'); the name given to Venus when it is 'the morning star': cf. ix. 3.

The reference to the double office discharged by the planet is as old as Plato, but in his case the point made is that the star of the morning has become the star of the night.

the wakeful bird; the cock: with allusion perhaps to the supposed derivation of ἀλέκτωρ from α 'not,' and λέκτρον 'a bed.'

the greater light; the sun, as in Gen. i. 16.

The question has been raised as to whether Tennyson meant that the evening star of one day actually appeared as the morning star of the next. It is just possible, it would seem, that this might be the case at mid-winter if Venus were very far north; but it would require a keen eye, and a knowledge of the exact position, to enable the observation to be made.

The poet's reference is no doubt to the generally recognised fact that throughout the earlier half of the year Venus is seen as an evening, and throughout the other half as a morning, star.

This canto was written at Shiplake in Oxfordshire during a visit paid to the Vicar, the Rev. Drummond Rawnsley, an intimate friend of Tennyson, who subsequently officiated at his wedding.

CXXII

Would indeed that one experience of my past might be repeated! that I might feel again his being infusing itself into mine, and filling me with the strong energy and glorious ecstasy of more abundant life.

1 *my doom;* of grief. So Tennyson explained the expression.

yearn'd; 'strove,' in the 1st edition.

2 *once more;* as in the experience described in xcv.

A sphere of stars. The planets were anciently supposed to be set in spheres which moved round the earth: outside the sphere of the furthest planet was 'the sphere of the fixed stars' (*σφαῖρα ἀπλανής*).

This conception underlay the expression 'the music of the spheres'; and formed the ground-plan of Dante's *Paradiso.*

3 *be with me;* compare the 'be near me' of canto l.

4 *slip the thoughts of life and death;* see concluding note on xcv.

CXXIII

True, I know that all things mundane are even as passing shadows. But though the earth be removed and the hills be carried into the midst of the sea, yet I take refuge amid the certainties of the spirit, which simply refuses to conceive of a parting for ever, whatever the lips may say.

3 *I cannot think the thing farewell;* contrast the conclusion of canto lvii, noting the first line of lviii.

CXXIV

It is thus that we arrive at our holiest convictions. Our assurance, not only of the continued existence of a human friend, but of the supreme fact of the Divine omnipresence, comes to us not as the result of an argument from design or metaphysical investigation, but as the impassioned affirmation of the universal human heart. The spirit in man, amid all confusions of thought, is dimly but certainly aware of the Fatherly Power in which it lives and has its being.

1 Note the humility, the reverence, the deep sense of the vital importance of the issues, the earnestness, and the diffidence of this opening stanza.

2 'Can man by searching find out God? I believe not': Arthur Hallam, *Remains*, p. 343.

It is not to be supposed that Tennyson was insensible to what may seem to be indications of design in Nature. His friend Edward Fitzgerald for instance writes, 'Picking up a daisy as we walked, and looking close to its crimson-tipt leaves he said: "Does not this look like a thinking Artificer, one who wishes to ornament?"'

4 'The atheism of the understanding is annihilated by the heart.' F. W. Robertson.

the heart stood up and answer'd: compare 'Le cœur a ses raisons que la raison ne connait pas': Pascal (*Pensées*, Ed. Faugère, ii. 172).

5 *a child that cries;* cf. liv. 5.

6 *what I am;* an important alteration from the 'what I seem' of the 1st edition.

came the hands; as if to meet mine: see lv. 5.

The late Professor Henry Sidgwick, writing of the 3rd and 4th stanzas, said, 'If the stanzas had stopped here' (i.e. at the end of the 4th), 'we should have shaken our heads and said,

'"Feeling must not usurp the function of Reason. Feeling is not knowing. It is the duty of a rational being to follow truth wherever it leads."

'But the poet's instinct knows this; he knows that this usurpation by Feeling of the function of Reason is too bold and confident; accordingly in the next stanza he gives the turn to humility in the protest of Feeling which is required (I think) to win the assent of the "man in men" at this stage of human thought.

'These lines I can never read without tears. I feel in them the indestructible and inalienable minimum of faith which humanity cannot give up because it is necessary for life; and which I know that I, at least so far as the man in me is deeper than the methodical thinker, cannot give up.' (*Mem.* i. p. 303.)

CXXV

Looking back upon all that I have uttered, I do not hesitate to maintain that underneath what may have sounded discordant there has been a fundamental consistency. Indeed the very fact that the mind could dally with doubts was in itself a sign that the heart felt sufficiently strong in its hold upon reality. Hope has never really failed. Love has inspired all hitherto, and will continue to do so to the last.

4 *To seek thee on the mystic deeps;* compare ciii. 14.

electric; cf. 'magnetic,' cxx. 1.

CXXVI

So then for the present I can wait, and serve, in this earthly outpost of the great empire of Love. Enough that I am continually assured that my friend is within the same realm, and that throughout the whole of it 'all's well.'

3 A reference to the ancient custom of the 'night watchman' who used to go round calling out to let people know what o'clock it was, and to assure them that 'all is well.' Survivals of the practice are still to be met with; as for example, in the Precincts at Canterbury.

CXXVII

Yes, even though for awhile we may have to pass through a reign of terror in which all outward signs of faith may disappear, it is certain that truth and justice have not had their day. The foundations of the social order may be upheaved, prince and pauper may go under in a common destruction; this age of civilisation may end in panic and perdition—and yet to some here, and to eyes that watch from yonder, it is evident still that 'all is well.'

1 *faith and form;* cf. xxxiii. 1, 3.

2 *tho' thrice again;* this fixes the date of this canto as not earlier than 1848.

4 *The brute earth;* the earth which is heavy and dull. Compare *Comus*, 797,

> dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
> And the brute earth...

Milton doubtless borrowed the expression from the 'bruta tellus' of Horace (*Odes*, i. 34, 9).

5 *knowing all is well;* cf. lxxxv. 23.

In a lecture on Poetry, delivered in 1852, F. W. Robertson speaking of *In Memoriam* and its problems said:

'By slow degrees, all these doubts, and worse, are answered; not as a philosopher would answer them, nor as a theologian, or a metaphysician, but as it is the duty of a poet to reply, by intuitive faculty, in strains in which Imagination predominates over Thought and Memory. And one of the manifold beauties of this exquisite poem, and which is another characteristic of true Poetry, is that, piercing through the sophistries and over-refinements of speculation, and the lifeless scepticism of science, it falls back upon the grand, primary, simple truths of our humanity; those first principles which underlie all creeds, which belong to our earliest childhood, and on which the wisest and best have rested through all ages: that all is right: that darkness shall be clear: that God and Time are the only interpreters: that Love is king: that the Immortal is in us: that—which is the key-note of the whole—

all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear.'

(*Addresses and Literary Remains*, p. 93.)

CXXVIII

The conviction that love will prove stronger than death hereafter, carries with it the belief which refuses to despair of a future for humanity here. Such a belief does not imply indeed that there will be no retrogressions or downfalls; but it does mean that there is to be not merely change but progress, with a goal to be reached and an ideal to be attained. To think otherwise would be to reduce life to a contemptible absurdity.

6 *cöoperant;* a word of the poet's coining. For the sense compare the expression, "all things work together for good." (Rom. viii. 28.)

CXXIX

My concluding message shall be breathed to my friend, at once so distant and so near. I would that he should know that, after all I have experienced of the depth beneath and the height above, my soul more than ever, and for ever, turns to him. With him I have learnt to associate every best hope that I have, not only for myself, but for mankind.

3 *Loved deeplier, darklier understood;* compare xcvii. 9.

CXXX

I am conscious of the influence of his presence everywhere. And yet, though he seems thus diffused and mingled with all that is supernatural and natural, he is not to me a whit less personal; nor is my love for him the less intense. So then earth can offer nothing to make my joy more complete, and death can do nothing to destroy it.

3 *mix'd with God and Nature;* compare 'I trust he lives in thee' (*Prologue*, 10).

4 *circled with thy voice;* as in a whispering gallery. In a sonnet addressed by Arthur Hallam to Emily Tennyson, the lines occur,

> Lady, I bid thee to a sunny dome
> . . . . . .
> Old Dante's voice encircles all the air.
> (*Remains*, p. 85.)

With this canto should be compared the following lines from Shelley's *Adonais* (§ 42). The comparison will serve to shew how careful Tennyson has been to keep his utterance free from

anything like a merely pantheistic vagueness. Speaking of Keats, Shelley says:

> He is made one with Nature: there is heard
> His voice in all her music, from the moan
> Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
> He is a presence to be felt and known
> In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
> Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
> Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
> Which wields the world with never wearied love,
> Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

CXXXI

May the Divine within us so reveal itself, that we may have no doubt left as to a Divine above us, and may at length attain in the communion of another life to a certainty of absolute knowledge which can never be possible here.

1 *O living will that shalt endure.* Tennyson explained this to mean, that which we know as Free-will, the higher and enduring part of man. 'Free-will was undoubtedly,' he said, 'the main miracle, apparently an act of self-limitation by the Infinite, and yet a revelation by Himself of Himself.' (*Mem.* i. pp. 319, 316.) Compare *Prologue*, 4.

all that seems; the material and phenomenal. The following words uttered by the poet in January 1869, supply the best commentary upon the first two lines of this stanza.

'Yes, it is true that there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the Spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it, the Spiritual *is* the real: it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence, I could believe you; but you never, never can convince me that the *I* is not an eternal Reality, and that the Spiritual is not the true and real part of me.' His son adds: 'These

words he spoke with such passionate earnestness that a solemn silence fell on us as he left the room.' (*Mem.* ii. p. 90.)

the spiritual rock; the supernatural source from which springs up this water of life. The expression is taken from St Paul (1 Cor. x. 4): for the idea of the fountain rising within cf. St John iv. 14. Compare 'all we flow from' in the last stanza.

Flow thro' our deeds; that the influence may extend from feeling to action. Compare xxxvi. 3, where the power of the Incarnation is described as manifested 'in loveliness of perfect deeds.'

make them pure; do, that is, what no example appealing from without can do. Compare lii. 3, 'What keeps a spirit wholly true?'

2 *from out of dust;* our material nature made from the dust and returning to dust again. Compare the line in the *Prologue*, 'Thou wilt not leave us in the dust.' The Dust of Death is to be contrasted with the Water of Life.

A voice as unto him that hears; compare cxxiv. 5.

the conquer'd years; contrast 'the victor hours' of i. 4. Here the eternal within us is represented as defying the limitations of time.

3 *faith that comes of self-control.* It is as the lower in man is brought under the rule of the higher that he becomes convinced of the existence of a Highest.

Until we close. Tennyson does not say unconditionally that the truths of faith 'never can be proved,' as his words are sometimes taken to imply. What he says is, that they 'never can be proved *until*' we are re-united with our loved ones in God. Compare, 'we cannot know' (*Prologue*, 6).

It is only the 'lesser truths' which 'can in any sense be either proved or disproved.' Of 'the Christian view of human experience,' on the other hand, it has been well said

that 'Its evidence is to be found in the light which it brings far more than in any light which it receives': see Dr Hort's *The Way, The Truth, The Life*, pp. 11, 12.

In this last canto there is laid bare before us the innermost working of the mind of the poet, and we are permitted to trace the steps by which he has been enabled to rise to 'higher things.' It has been from his increasing sense of the reality of the spiritual in human nature, that he has gained his strong conviction of the existence and character of God; and it has been upon this twofold assurance that he has built his hopes of immortality and the ultimate fulfilment of all noblest ideals.

The argument is not so much that of logic as of life. It follows that if the hopes are to remain it can only be because the experience upon which they are based is continually being renewed. Hence the solemn earnestness of his wish, for himself and for us.

EPILOGUE

The poem fitly concludes with words which give practical proof that the days of solitary mourning are past: and that out of the joy which has entered into his own life the sufferer is now able to minister to the lives of others. The marriage of a sister with a friend, which at one time might have prompted the saddest repinings, is now the occasion of a true congratulation. Each detail of the ceremony is dwelt upon, and the social festivities which followed are described with sympathetic delight. For such a union is regarded as the surest pledge of good; a step which may bring us nearer to that perfecting of manhood of which a promise was given in the noble human life of him who now lives in the God through Whom and in Whom and to Whom are all things.

1 *O true and tried;* Edmund Law Lushington (see lxxxv. 2) who, on October 10, 1842, was married to Tennyson's youngest sister Cecilia. The wedding took place at Boxley, near Maidstone, where the Tennysons had settled in 1841.

3 *Some thrice three years;* from 1831—1842.

13 *on the dead;* who lie beneath the floor of the Church.

14 They were married by the Rev. Charles Tennyson Turner. Professor Lushington died in 1893; his widow and their daughter Cecilia are still living (1901).

24 *roam the park;* surrounding Park House, the residence of Edmund Lushington, some two miles from where the Tennysons were living.

31 *A soul shall draw from out the vast;* compare the lines in *Crossing the Bar*:

When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

See also the poem *De Profundis*, written on the birth of the poet's own son.

strike his being into bounds; cf. xlv. 3.

32 *moved thro' life of lower phase.* The later physiological discoveries with regard to the gradual evolution of the human embryo add force to the language here employed by the poet.

the crowning race; cf. cxviii. 4.

36 There is a remarkable passage in the *Thoughts* of Marcus Aurelius (vii. 9, as translated by G. H. Rendall), which in many points resembles this closing stanza.

'The world order,' he says, 'is one made out of all things, and God is one pervading all, and being is one, and law is one, even the common reason of all beings possessed of mind, and truth is one: seeing that truth is the one perfecting of beings one in kind and endowed with the same reason.'

What we chiefly miss in the utterance of the philosopher, as contrasted with that of our poet, is the acknowledgment of the Divine *Love.* In a sentence, indicative of no ordinary insight, Arthur Hallam had expressed his conviction that 'the great error of the Deistical mode of arguing is the assumption that intellect is something more pure and akin to Divinity than emotion' (*Remains*, p. 361).

It may indeed be said that the whole trend of the *In Memoriam* has been steadily towards a far truer conclusion.

Slowly and in the face of great difficulties, after much battling through the darkness, and many deep communings with itself, the soul of the struggler has emerged with a clear and stedfast belief in a 'God which ever lives and loves.'

It is this highest faith which includes the certainty of a human progress that sooner or later must inevitably reach its appointed goal of good.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Those who may wish to follow into greater detail the lines of interpretation which have been indicated in this Commentary will derive much assistance from such books as the following:

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON: A MEMOIR BY HIS SON.

Indispensable to students of the poet, and especially welcome as shewing that he himself was not less great than his work.

TENNYSON: HIS ART AND RELATION TO MODERN LIFE: by STOPFORD A. BROOKE.

Specially valuable, so far as this poem is concerned, for the descriptions of its artistic effects. Our quotations on *pages* 181 and 243 are taken from it.

PRIMER OF TENNYSON: by W. M. DIXON.

Able and critical.

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The Essay upon 'Tennyson and Browning' contains a striking statement of the differing standpoints of the two poets.

TENNYSON AS A RELIGIOUS TEACHER: by C. F. G. MASTERMAN.

An excellent survey of Tennyson's work in its relation to Natural Science, Philosophy, and definitely Christian Theology.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1809, Aug. 6.	Tennyson born. (The birth year also of Mendelssohn, Darwin and Gladstone.)
1811, Feb. 1.	A. H. Hallam born.
1827, March.	*Poems by Two Brothers.*
1828, Feb. 20.	Tennyson matriculated.
— June.	Hallam matriculated.
1829, July.	Tennyson's prize poem, *Timbuctoo.*
1830.	'Poems chiefly Lyrical,' 56 in all: among them, *Mariana,* *The poet in a golden clime,* *Vex not thou the poet's wit.*
— Summer.	Visit with Hallam to Pyrenees.
1832, January.	Hallam took his degree.
— July.	Tour with Hallam on the Rhine.
— December.	'Poems,' including *The Lady of Shalott,* *Œnone,* *The Palace of Art,* *The May Queen,* *The Lotos Eaters,* *A Dream of Fair Women,* '*To J. S.*' [James Spedding].
1833, Sept. 15.	Hallam died.
1834, Jan. 3.	Burial at Clevedon.

1837, early.	Departure from Somersby.
1842.	'Poems' (2 vols.), containing for the first time, *Morte d'Arthur*, *The Gardener's Daughter*, *Dora*, *St Simon Stylites*, *Ulysses*, *Locksley Hall*, *The Two Voices* (written in 1833, after death of A. H. H.), *The Vision of Sin*, *Break, break, break* (said to have been the first thing that Tennyson wrote after his great loss).
1844.	The Tennysons settled at Cheltenham.
1847.	*The Princess* (little more than a sketch of the poem as we have it now).
1850, June.	IN MEMORIAM.
— June 13.	Marriage; followed by his first visit to Clevedon.
— Nov. 19.	Appointed Poet Laureate, to succeed Wordsworth.
. . . . .	
1892, Oct. 6.	Death of Lord Tennyson. (Thus the poet was born in the first decade of the century, and died in the last.)

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